



DAILY BRIEFING April 7, 2005

Lawmakers seize on fine print to fend off base closing

By Amy Klamper, [CongressDaily](#)

Lawmakers and some state governors looking to shield their military installations from the 2005 base closure round have seized on an obscure statute they say could prevent the Pentagon from shuttering National Guard facilities.

The Illinois congressional delegation, led by House Speaker Dennis Hastert, wrote Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld last month highlighting the Guard law in a bid to save installations in their state, including the 183rd Fighter Wing at Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport in Springfield and the 182nd Airlift Wing in Peoria.

Hastert, along with Democratic Sen. Richard Durbin and GOP Rep. Ray LaHood, pointed out that Title 10 of U.S. code states that Army or Air National Guard units may not be "relocated or withdrawn under this chapter without the consent of the governor of the state."

Congressional sources familiar with the law say the words "under this chapter" give the statute no influence over the BRAC law, which is contained in a separate chapter under Title 10. The letter from the Illinois lawmakers noted the law states, "(N)othing in the BRAC provisions neither amends nor calls for the amending of the above ... provision, which is part of the general and permanent law applicable to the National Guard."

The congressional sources agreed that the BRAC law and the law prohibiting the closing of National Guard facilities without a governor's consent are unrelated, leaving all National Guard bases subject to the forthcoming base-closing round.

The Illinois delegation called on Rumsfeld to immediately stop any actions that might violate this law, and other states, including Oklahoma and California, might invoke the law to prevent closures of Guard facilities. But experts say historically Guard bases have been mostly spared from the BRAC ax. In previous rounds, only four Guard bases have been affected, including three that were relocated and one that was closed.

Observers note that the upcoming base closure round poses a stronger likelihood of targeting Guard facilities because of the Pentagon's emphasis this year on the need for military installations that can support joint military operations.

The Defense Department has until May 16 to submit a list of potential closings to the newly appointed BRAC commission, which will have until Sept. 8 to review and potentially challenge the Pentagon's list before forwarding it to the White House.

The president can accept the list and forward it to Congress, where lawmakers will have 45 legislative days to approve or reject the list in its entirety. The Pentagon asserts that four previous BRAC rounds have yielded a net savings of \$16.7 billion, and an annual savings since 2001 of nearly \$7 billion.



DAILY BRIEFING April 7, 2005

California may fare better in 2005 base closings, report says

By George Cahlink

With more military bases and personnel than any other state, California has much to lose during the upcoming round of base closings, but the state is better positioned than it was in the 1980 and 1990s when it bore the brunt of military downsizing, a new independent report concludes.

"Four BRAC rounds battered California, and their effects are still being felt throughout the state," says the nonpartisan California Institute for Federal Policy Research in [its report](#). "Looking forward, the lessons of California's past base closures can inform the state's future course. A united front and strategic outlook can help the state's defense-oriented communities survive, and thrive, regardless of what the 2005 BRAC round may yield."

The Pentagon will release on May 16 a list of military bases that it wants to close or realign. Once the list is published, a nonpartisan BRAC commission will review it, hold public hearings and visit bases before making final recommendations to the president and Congress in September for their final approval.

California lost 93,546 military and civilian jobs when 24 bases were closed in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995. Today, the Golden State still has 93 military bases and about 130,000 military and 57,000 civilian personnel, which generate more than \$100 billion for the state's economy.

The report says there are three ways to "affect" the final BRAC list: using "connections" at DoD or within the executive branch to stay off the Pentagon's list; influencing the makeup of the BRAC commission to ensure that state and community interests are represented; and finally, arguing for the removal of bases from lists at BRAC hearings.

The report found that California has been "active" in attempting to keep its bases off the Pentagon list, noting that statewide and local retention efforts are far better than in past years. But, the report cautions, the "private nature" of BRAC deliberations makes it impossible to know whether they are working.

The commission makeup appears "favorable," the report found. Researchers noted it will be chaired by San Diego resident Anthony Principi, a former Veteran Affairs Secretary. Another commissioner, Philip Coyle, also lives in southern California, and four of the nine commissioners come from Western states. "West Coast concerns are unlikely to be ignored."

Finally, the report says, making the Pentagon list is often a "death sentence" - since the majority are approved by the commission - but that should not prevent communities from making a case to the BRAC panel based on military value. "Complaining about past inequities would be likely far less effective," the report recommends, "than explaining the detrimental implications for national security of an inadequate Pacific Coast defense infrastructure."



DAILY BRIEFING April 8, 2005

Puerto Rico seeks to protect its lone military base

By Amy Klamper, [CongressDaily](#)

A Puerto Rican government delegation was in Washington this week seeking to shield Ft. Buchanan, the island's lone remaining U.S. military installation, from the upcoming 2005 base-closing round.

The group presented to Pentagon officials a plan to enhance Buchanan's military value, as well as the economic and social benefits it offers to the Defense Department and the 15,000 reserve forces in Puerto Rico.

Eduardo Bhatia, executive director of the Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, said part of the plan would involve selling off a Puerto Rican National Guard property -- worth an estimated \$30 million -- and consolidating the Puerto Rico Army National Guard with U.S. Army reservists at Buchanan, an effort they say would create savings for the Army Reserve.

But first, Puerto Rico officials must persuade lawmakers to lift a three-year-old building moratorium on the base to allow for construction, including a \$30 million National Guard headquarters at Buchanan funded by the sale of the guard facility.

Although it is unclear whether House and Senate authorizers will remove the ban in defense authorization legislation this year, Bhatia said the Pentagon supports the idea.

"Of all the people we met with, 100 percent in the Pentagon wanted the moratorium lifted," Bhatia said. "It has created a problem in terms of recruiting personnel, for preparing Guard and reservists for work they have to do out in Iraq."

The moratorium was put in place in 2002 as an interim measure that was directly linked to continuing Navy training at Vieques Island. When the Navy closed Roosevelt Roads Naval Station near Vieques last year, taking with it 6,000 jobs and an estimated \$300 million annually, the building moratorium on Buchanan remained.

"We are very enthusiastic for the future, but we need to lift this moratorium right away," Bhatia said, adding that the ban is so vaguely worded that officials at Buchanan recently questioned whether it was legal to repaint some buildings.

The U.S. military presence is a divisive issue in Puerto Rico, although the government supports increased investment in the last remaining base.

Puerto Rico Secretary of State Marisara Pont and Economic Development and Commerce Secretary Jorge Silva also were at this week's meetings. Puerto Rico would lose some \$200 million in annual revenue if Buchanan is closed. For the time being, the base continues to play a critical role in recruiting and retention, an issue of importance to a military stretched thin with extended deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The base has the 16th highest overall contribution to the Army National Guard and reserve and the sixth highest per capita contribution of all states and territories.

"It is the place for recruiting a majority of National Guardsmen and reservists who have been fighting in the Gulf," Bhatia said.

Buchanan is also the only active Army post in the Caribbean basin area, boasting the nation's only fully bilingual and bicultural force and playing a major role in the Caribbean and South America. The base supports a total population of 105,000, with at least 23 federal agencies and nearly 2,000 federal dependents attending Buchanan's consolidated school.

Los Angeles Times
April 8, 2005

Gov.'s Group Vows To Fight Base Closings In State

By Eric Bailey and Tony Perry, Times Staff Writers

SACRAMENTO — Officials of a group assembled by the governor to fight any effort by the federal government to close military bases in the state vowed a vigorous campaign Thursday, including politicking in the corridors of power in Washington.

The base closure process is supposed to be immune from politics, but former Rep. Leon Panetta, co-chairman of the California Council on Base Support and Retention, said keeping politics out of anything in Washington was nearly impossible.

"Having been in Washington for 30 years, I know there isn't any process that's completely closed," he told reporters at a Capitol briefing.

Gov. Schwarzenegger has vowed that California will present a more unified front than it did in 1995 during the last round of base closings, when the state lost more Department of Defense jobs than the rest of the U.S. combined, according to a report by the Washington-based California Institute for Federal Policy Research. Since 1988, 24 major bases in the state have been closed.

"What we do not want is to repeat the mistakes of the past," said Panetta.

Panetta noted that California lawmakers from both major political parties serve as chairs of congressional committees on rules, appropriations, armed services and ways and means. The members of the California delegation "seem to be very unified," Panetta said. "This is one where we could have a bipartisan effort and mean it."

The state has 62 major facilities with 188,104 military and civilian employees, more than any other state. The Department of Defense payroll and contract value for California tops \$42 billion.

The Defense Department is set to release its proposed list of closures and realignments on May 16. The list then goes to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission, appointed by President Bush, which will hold hearings before submitting its own list to Bush by Sept. 23. If the president approves the list, it will be forwarded to Congress.

In 1995, when communities were largely left to mount their own lobbying efforts, the state lost 16,362 military and civilian jobs due to base closures. The rest of the country, combined, lost 15,058.

Panetta said the state would emphasize California's "military assets," such as mountain ranges, deserts and an ocean for training purposes, as well as universities, research institutes and private industries often called on for assistance.

Panetta said the governor was "very engaged in this process.... He's ready to do whatever it takes." In the past rounds of base closures, California's arguments "were not made very effectively," he said.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch
April 7, 2005
Pg. B1

Illinois Presses Case For Scott

Scott and three other bases in the state contribute more than \$2.5 billion to Illinois' economy each year and support almost 70,000 jobs.

By Philip Dine, Post-Dispatch Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON -- With military base-closing decisions growing closer, Illinois officials Wednesday intensified their efforts to protect Scott Air Force Base and the state's four other military installations.

Several members of the Illinois congressional delegation met with Jack Lavin, director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, to discuss the military base realignment and closure process and its possible impact on Illinois.

Meanwhile, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed an executive order directing state agencies to coordinate land planning decisions with Illinois military installations to improve the bases' military value by helping make them as "flexible, prepared and well-equipped to meet the nation's needs" as possible.

"Scott Air Force Base, Rock Island Arsenal and the Air National Guard bases in Peoria and Springfield all play critical roles in protecting our national security interests, while making enormous contributions to our state's economy," Blagojevich said.

Those bases contribute more than \$2.5 billion to the state's economy each year and support almost 70,000 jobs.

State officials don't see the fifth Illinois site, the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, as being threatened by the process. Bases in Missouri also are regarded as relatively safe.

The Defense Department is scheduled to announce its list of bases to be affected on May 16; a nine-member commission consisting of congressional and presidential appointees will then examine the list and consider changes. Congressional defense committees also will look at it, with President George W. Bush to certify the final list by Nov. 7.

The May 16 list is seen as critical. In the past round of closings, 85 percent of bases placed on the list were eventually shut down.

Scott, home to the U.S. Transportation Command, the Air Mobility Command, two airlift wings and a refueling wing, is seen by the delegation as the most important base to protect, because of its defense role and its large impact on Southern Illinois.

Rep. Jerry Costello, D-Ill., said after the delegation meeting that he remains optimistic about Scott's future. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., said he and other legislators would speak to commission members about the military and economic roles the Illinois bases play. Also at the session were Reps. Ray LaHood, R-Ill., Lane Evans, D-Ill., and William Lipinski, D-Ill., and staff members for House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., and Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill.

LaHood said the group is still awaiting a response to a letter he, Durbin and Hastert sent two weeks ago to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, contending that federal law prohibits the closing or relocation of Army and Air National Guard installations or bases without the consent of the state's governor.

"Our office has been flooded with calls" from legislators and officials from other states interested in that point, LaHood said. "I believe we started a real brush fire."

Lavin said one reason to speak now with commission members is to make the case that bases in Illinois stand ready to take on additional workloads resulting from other facilities being closed.

Philadelphia Inquirer
April 9, 2005

Community Wants Base To Stay

Area leaders say the Willow Grove Naval Air Station is vital to the area. A base-closing study is pending.

By Marc Schogol, Inquirer Staff Writer

Community leaders and elected officials have launched a preemptive strike to avert any possibility that the government might close the Willow Grove Naval Air Station and Joint Reserve Base.

A presidential commission appointed last month will review 425 stateside military bases and facilities and recommend those that should be eliminated or realigned.

When the last base realignment and closure review was conducted in 1994, Willow Grove was on the initial list of bases recommended for closing. But it fell off during the congressional approval process.

There is no indication that Willow Grove is on any endangered list. But the 1994 experience convinced the Suburban Horsham-Willow Grove Chamber of Commerce to form a Regional Military Affairs Committee and apply to the state Department of Community and Economic Development last year for a \$55,000 grant, used in part to retain two independent consulting firms to muster facts and arguments just in case.

"We're really doing our due diligence to make sure we've done our homework in advance," said Edward Strouse, chamber vice president.

Strouse said the grant money was authorized as part of Gov. Rendell's economic-stimulus package approved by the legislature in December 2003.

This year, the package sets aside \$3.3 million specifically "to assist local defense organizations" in protecting active, reserve and National Guard positions that could be affected by the base closings.

Strouse would not say how much of the chamber's grant went to the consultants.

Yesterday, the chamber held a meeting to present results of the commissioned studies arguing that closing Willow Grove would have a damaging effect on the area's economy.

Sprawling over 1,200 acres on the Montgomery County-Bucks County border, Willow Grove is one of only three bases in the country that have Reserve and National Guard flight units from all the military services.

Established during World War II, it is the home base for about 5,000 reservists, 1,200 active-duty personnel, and 600 civilians. Many of its uniformed personnel have been activated for duty in and in support of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq.

At yesterday's breakfast meeting, the chamber urged civic and government leaders to unite to stress the vital economic and military reasons for keeping the base open.

The politicians in attendance, including U.S. Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D, Pa.) and several members of the state legislature, told the chamber that they supported their efforts.

"I understand how important the air station is to the community's economic vitality and also to security and national defense," said Schwartz, elected in November to represent the district.

"I'm going to work with you to do everything to keep Willow Grove open," she vowed.

In the current base-closing review, Willow Grove faces a number of deadlines.

On May 16, the Department of Defense will release a list of recommended base closings. Subsequently, the presidential commission will visit those facilities.

The commission must submit its report to the President by Sept. 8. Congress then has 45 days to approve or disapprove the recommendations.

Ike Puzon, president of Washington-based Puzon Associates, one of the two consulting groups, said the chamber should build a coalition before May 16.

Puzon was commander of the Naval Air Station in Atlanta in 1994 and successfully defended his base against a recommended shutdown at that time.

If the commission recommended closing Willow Grove, the chamber would be able to make its case directly to that panel.

"We're prepared to go to Washington if we're on the list," Strouse said. "Supporting this base is crucial."

San Diego Union-Tribune
April 8, 2005

California Prepares Pitch To Pentagon On State's Key Role In Defense

By Michael Gardner, Copley News Service

SACRAMENTO – California has armed its congressional delegation and military communities with a comprehensive manual compiled to convince the Pentagon that closing bases in the state would undermine national security.

The 53-page sales pitch approved by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger yesterday argues that bases in California are uniquely positioned to bolster national defense, from the deep-sea port and Marine Corps training facilities in San Diego to the testing grounds for the unmanned Global Hawk at Beale Air Force Base north of Sacramento.

California also must counter perceptions that the state's environmental regulations and high-cost of living makes it inhospitable for bases, the report states.

Completed just five weeks before the Department of Defense is to announce its closure targets, the report was prepared by a team of the governor's hand-picked experts, including retired generals and admirals, and led by former Clinton Chief of Staff Leon Panetta and former Reagan aide Donna Tuttle.

Here's how the panel's report frames the issue:

"Assessing the probable threats of the 21st Century, which define a greater emphasis on Asia and the Pacific, and in developing the capability to fight war effectively in the century ahead, which dictates a greater investment in technology, California's role in our nation's defense should be increased – not decreased."

With 62 facilities, 275,000 jobs and \$42 billion annually on the line, California is gearing up with a bipartisan effort to counter aggressive maneuvering by other states eager to protect their installations. California's steep losses in previous base-closure rounds have been blamed in part on internal feuding and minimal resistance.

In making its case, the panel did not offer a priority list of bases.

Time is running short.

The Pentagon, moving to slash spending, will unveil its recommendations by May 16. The list will be submitted to President Bush's Base Closure Commission, which will then send a recommendation to the president by Sept. 8. Next, the president will forward the list to Congress, which must act by November.

Congress cannot substitute or delete bases; it must accept the whole list or vote it down.

Schwarzenegger's panel suggests the state's strategic location to counter growing threats in the Pacific, the state's all-terrain and all-weather training grounds, vast restricted air space, and civilian brain-trust that has developed space technology.

"California has unrecognized, irreplaceable physical assets," Tuttle said.

Added Panetta, "If you get rid of those, you're not going to get them back."

Anticipating some disappointment, California needs to campaign for more federal dollars and accelerated base transfers to help communities cope with the loss of a facility, the panel recommended.

Los Angeles Times
April 10, 2005
Pg. 1

Old Bases Battle For New Life

Communities say more federal money is needed to rehab the ex-military spaces they've inherited, which are often polluted and impractical to use.

By Ralph Vartabedian, Times Staff Writer

MONTEREY, Calif. — Along a seemingly a pristine stretch of Central California coastline, the Army is digging holes and sifting through a mountain of sand, looking for unexploded artillery shells, rocket propelled grenades and other ordnance buried at the former Ft. Ord infantry base.

The last soldiers marched out of Ft. Ord 10 years ago, but so far the Army has cleared just 5% of the base's firing range. The Army has unearthed more than 8,000 live shells, and the job could take another 20 years. Even then, Army officials can't guarantee they will get every last bit of ordnance.

The issues at Ft. Ord, which overlooks Monterey Bay, mirror a long list of environmental and economic disasters at closed bases across the nation, where critics say the Pentagon has badly mismanaged the cleanup and redevelopment process.

In coming weeks, the Defense Department will unveil its biggest effort yet to eliminate surplus military capacity, ordering the closure of as many as 24% of its facilities. Since 1998, there have been four rounds of military base closures.

"The economic devastation is great," said Harry Kelso, chairman of Base Closure Partners, an advisor to base communities. "It hits the local schools, the businesses that supported the base, and you lose the direct jobs at the base. Then on top of all that, you have a contaminated piece of property."

Radioactive contamination, lawsuits, leaking underground tanks, lost jobs, dilapidated buildings, broken promises, asbestos-laden soil and unexploded ordnance are just a sampling of the problems that have led to growing dissatisfaction and in some cases anger on both the military and civilian sides.

In almost every case, it has taken military services far longer than expected to clean up pollution at the facilities and turn the land over to local communities for redevelopment.

And once local agencies have received land deeds and Pentagon assurances that pollution was properly cleaned up, they have typically discovered environmental time bombs.

"We would like to see a lot more funding to get this cleanup moving faster," said David Brandt, an Alameda, Calif., assistant city attorney involved in redeveloping the former Alameda Naval Air Station, which was shuttered 10 years ago and still has massive contamination. "You have to spin your wheels while you wait for the federal government."

A significant number of environmental and economic trouble spots are in California, largely because of the state's huge share of military bases. San Francisco Bay, for example, touches four Superfund pollution sites at former military bases. Other former bases account for 14 Superfund sites across the state.

Defense officials say overall they have done a good job but acknowledge that some base closures have been problematic. There are "frustrations on both sides of the equation," said Phil Grone, the Pentagon's top official for the environment and facilities.

Base closures have saved the Defense Department \$29 billion and continue to generate savings of \$7 billion each year, according to the Government Accountability Office. The GAO found that the Pentagon had passed the halfway point of cleaning up most bases.

As it prepares for more closures, the Bush administration is adopting a new strategy to sell property more quickly. Essentially, it aims to privatize the cleanup and get the military agencies out of long-term environmental and economic relationships with local communities.

The Pentagon is hoping that outright sales of base property will help fund future cleanups, though that prospect is uncertain. One of its most valuable parcels, the former El Toro Marine base in Irvine, fetched far less than expected at an auction this year.

"I think we will be able to do a better job than we have in the past," Grone said in an interview. "We know a whole lot more now about the environmental condition of our bases."

Defense officials say they are not at fault for all the delays in getting bases redeveloped. Indeed, El Toro's redevelopment was delayed by disputes over a proposal to locate a major airport at the base. In other cases, land use restrictions have hampered redevelopment.

But critics say that the military has done a terrible job and that the new policies could make matters even worse.

"You couldn't design a program to harm communities more economically, even if you intended to do it," said Saul Bloom, executive director of Arc Ecology, an environmental group in San Francisco that has focused on military base issues. "There are no incentives for the Defense Department to do well. Nobody has ever been promoted to general for doing a good base cleanup."

Bloom and many local leaders say federal authorities are under-funding the cleanup. The Pentagon has spent about \$8.3 billion on cleanup and expects to spend an additional \$3.6 billion, figures that critics say are low-ball estimates of a job that could cost many times that when completed.

Even when bases are free of serious contamination or live ordnance, communities struggle to find alternative uses for bases. When the military pulls out, it usually leaves a small self-contained city that has no practical civilian use. Once-guarded main gates are open to anybody who wanders along, including vandals and arsonists.

Almost all closed military bases have hundreds of substandard, decrepit buildings. Sewer systems are minimally functional and not up to civilian standards. Electrical grids and roads must be torn out. Some buildings lack ventilation or heating. Even toilets are an issue.

"We discovered there weren't any potties," said Kathy Broderick, senior environmental coordinator in the conversion office at former McClellan Air Force Base outside Sacramento. "They just went out back in the woods."

That problem may be the least of the concerns at McClellan, one of the most polluted military facilities in the nation. After the base was closed, it was discovered that the Air Force had dug nine undocumented pits and dumped plutonium wastes, heavy metals and other toxins in them.

Pollution problems have delayed development of even seemingly valuable land at closed bases near major cities. After 10 years, the Bay Area's Alameda complex, for example, has a fraction of the development anticipated. Brandt, the city attorney, said the land may actually have a negative value because of contamination, including a large underground plume of trichloroethylene, a suspected carcinogen.

And as has occurred at many other bases, Alameda discovered new pollution after the Pentagon declared an area clean: After taking possession of an apartment complex, the city discovered it was contaminated with chlordane, a banned pesticide.

The Navy refused to pay for a \$4-million cleanup, forcing the city to recover the money from an environmental insurance policy issued by AIG Inc. The insurance giant is now suing the Defense Department, which claims it is protected by "sovereign immunity."

A similar issue tied up redevelopment at the former Lowry Air Force Base in Denver. A developer building new homes in 2003 discovered the soil was contaminated with asbestos from a military hospital demolished 50 years earlier. Colorado environmental regulators demanded that the asbestos be removed at a cost of \$10.5 million.

The city asked the Air Force for compensation, citing the federal law that makes the Defense Department liable for environmental cleanups at former bases. The Air Force balked, saying state officials had grossly overreacted to the asbestos. The dispute appears headed for a lawsuit, said Thomas Markham, head of the local reuse authority.

"There is nothing in the federal regulations that says they don't have to pay for a cleanup just because they don't like state standards," Markham said.

Experts say the discovery of new pollution is the norm rather than the exception at bases.

"Once you put a shovel in the ground, there are always going to be surprises," said Thomas Swoyer Jr., manager of impaired properties at Western Solutions Corp., a base closure contractor. "In one case, we were digging for asbestos in the soil and found a 500-pound bomb."

Meanwhile, rural communities often lack the resources to cope with complex development issues. When the Army closed a munitions depot in Seneca County, N.Y., the already economically depressed community lost 900 jobs, said Glenn R. Cooke, executive director of the local reuse authority.

And the county was left with 22 warehouses with caved-in roofs and another 500 steel-reinforced concrete igloos that will cost tens of millions of dollars to demolish. The county tried to get the U.S. Interior Department to take the land as a wildlife refuge, but the agency declined.

"We barely have two nickels to rub together in this county," Cooke said.

In affluent Monterey, such problems may not seem as relevant, but in fact the surrounding area is struggling economically with high unemployment, and the former Ft. Ord has many problems limiting its development.

The 45-square-mile base looks like it came out of a World War II time capsule with rows of clapboard-sided wooden barracks. The base has 6,000 structures, many contaminated with asbestos, PCBs and lead-based paint. At least 90% of the buildings will have to be demolished, according to Michael Houlemard Jr., executive director of the Ft. Ord Reuse Authority.

In the middle of the base, Army contractors have begun the painstaking job of clearing unexploded ordnance accumulated over five decades. The cleanup of small sections begins with removing brush with an armored lawn mower or by burning, though that can lead to other problems.

In October 2003, the Army began a controlled burn of about 500 acres but lost control and ignited 1,470 acres. It pelted multimillion-dollar homes in Monterey, Carmel and Pacific Grove with ash and soot.

After an area is burned over, workers walk the land and look for visible ordnance to remove. Then teams sweep the area with metal detectors. Every suspicious signal from the detectors must be investigated by digging a hole, often 4 feet deep, with a hand shovel.

When shells are found, they are detonated nearby, which reverberates all the way to downtown Monterey. Along with the shells, the Army has removed 3.2 million shards of rusty metal scrap.

"The fragments are driving us crazy," said Clinton Huckins, the Army Corps of Engineers safety and quality assurance chief at the cleanup. "It is very time consuming out there, very expensive."

What's more, there is no standard for cleaning up ordnance, unlike environmental standards for carcinogens or other toxins. The issue is being studied and debated by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Defense Department.

In the meantime, nobody is sure how clean is clean enough. In one area, the Army has scraped 2 feet of soil into a giant sandy mound that it will begin sifting in coming weeks.

"We can't guarantee anything," Huckins said. "It is buyer beware."

Boston Globe
April 10, 2005

Military Cuts Are Sharpest In New England

Officials worry for security, culture

By Bryan Bender, Globe Staff

New England has experienced a greater decline in military presence since the end of the Cold War than any other region of the country and is now at risk of losing its only active-duty air and naval bases, according to data compiled by the Globe and government officials.

Thirty-five of 93 major bases shuttered across the nation since 1988, or a third of the total, were in Northeastern and Midwestern states, part of an exodus of large military installations from Northern states over the last decade and a half to the economically friendlier South and West.

The six New England states saw the largest drop in active-duty personnel over the period. Nearly 60 percent of full-time military personnel based in the region went away as their installations were closed by decisions of four Base Realignment and Closure commissions, the last in 1995.

In 1988, New England was home base for 30,600 active-duty personnel. It is currently home to less than 12,700.

Now, New England is bracing to save the operational units that are left: its only remaining air base, in Brunswick, Maine, and only naval base, in New London, Conn. And some political leaders contend that in the push to shutter more facilities this year, a major region of the US homeland, where terrorists struck three years ago and where millions of people reside, could be left vulnerable.

"We cannot forget that it was in the Northeast that the worst terrorist attack on American soil occurred, leaving 3,000 Americans dead," said Senator Olympia Snowe, Republican of Maine. "Given this new reality in which we live, it is simply unimaginable that this BRAC round would close any more New England facilities."

The United States Northern Command, the military headquarters established in Colorado in 2002 to oversee domestic defense, maintains that every geographic region of the country is protected with the same level of effort.

"We don't concentrate on one area at the expense of another, whether that is South, North, East, or West," said Michael Kucharek, chief of media relations for the command in Colorado Springs.

Kucharek declined to provide specifics on plans for defending New England, including whether further base closings could slow response times to an attack.

Meanwhile, other observers worry about the social impact of further base closings, predicting that more losses could sever the cultural connection between so-called blue states and the military.

"What concerns me is how the forces are moving to a red state-blue state bifurcation," said John Pike, a military scholar at GlobalSecurity.org in Alexandria, Va. "Most of the bases are in the red states, and the bases in the blue states are mainly in red congressional districts. The military is a normal part of society in red states and not a normal part of society in many blue states."

In Massachusetts alone, the number of military personnel dropped by 74 percent between 1988 and 2002, from 9,335 to 2,427, far higher than the 24 percent reduction nationwide, according to government statistics compiled by the Northeast-Midwest Institute, a military lobbying group.

Maine had a 54 percent drop, from 5,849 to 2,689, according to the institute. The reduction was even more precipitous in New Hampshire, where the number of active-duty personnel in the state went from 4,143 to 326, a 92 percent drop and the largest slide in the nation.

It was part of a wider trend. Across the entire Northeast the drop in military personnel was 37.5 percent. In the Midwest it was 46.6 percent. But the West only saw a 30 percent drop, while the South witnessed a mere 15 percent slide.

"There is an unmistakable societal consequence if we create a military without ties, in the form of active duty bases, in every part of the country," said Senator John F. Kerry, Democrat of Massachusetts.

Representative Martin T. Meehan, a Lowell Democrat and senior member of the House Armed Services committee, predicted that a military absence in the Northeast could limit recruitment, if young people aren't inspired to join the services "when troops are already stretched thin."

The New England military map is far different than it was less than a generation ago. Before 1994, for example, at least nine air bases operated in the region. Now just one is operational, Brunswick.

The list of full-time bases that have closed since the end of the Cold War includes Otis Air Force Base in Sandwich; Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth, N.H.; the Army's Fort Devens in Ayer; the South Weymouth Naval Air Station; the Portsmouth Naval Base in Kittery, Maine; Loring Air Force Base in Limestone, Maine; Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, which no longer has a military airfield; Westover Air Force Base in Chicopee; and Plattsburgh Air Force Base just over the New York border from Vermont.

Base-closing specialists say lower costs have pushed military facilities South and West. In addition, inclement weather in the North can be an obstacle for military training, specialists said. Some also blamed local politicians and business leaders for failing to bring new military-related projects to the region, while others suspected Pentagon payback for the region's largely liberal voting record in Congress and opposition to increased defense spending.

Whatever the reasons for the closings, Snowe and other members of New England's congressional delegations are trying to fight back on national security grounds, arguing that more cuts would leave the 21 percent of the US population that lives in the Northeast less secure.

Citing intelligence reports, they point to a variety of potential threats to New England. They include the use of aircraft as weapons; the use of commercial cargo containers to smuggle terrorists or nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons; crashing a large cargo ship into a refinery or bridge; or detonating a liquefied natural gas carrier.

But now on the chopping block is Brunswick Naval Air Station, the only remaining active-duty airfield in the region, housing five full-time and two reserve squadrons of P-3 Orion patrol aircraft.

"Naval Air Station Brunswick is the only fully capable military airfield left in the Northeast," said Rick Tetrev, a retired Navy officer who is leading a task force to save the base.

But many military specialists criticize what they describe as scare tactics to save bases from closing, saying that the security arguments are politically driven. National Guard units -- including those stationed at former active-duty bases such as Pease, Westover, and Otis -- are capable of providing homeland security, they say.

"I believe the military should be free to determine where it wants to put its forces, free from political considerations," Gary Hart, a former Democratic senator from Colorado and a homeland security specialist, said in an interview. "Base structuring, like weapons procurement, should not be political. There are two military structures in the Constitution: a standing Army and Navy to defend our borders and interests abroad, and the so-called militias that became the National Guard. They are tasked with protecting the homeland, not the standing Army or Navy."

Washington Post
April 10, 2005
Pg. 3

Threat Of Closure Gives States Big Case Of Base Fever

By Jonathan Finer, Washington Post Staff Writer

KITTERY, Maine -- It was business as usual at the old Navy base on a recent weekday morning. Teams of mechanics tinkered with a pair of nuclear submarines in dry dock. A Coast Guard cutter arrived back from a choppy tour at sea.

For as long as anyone here can remember, this resilient coastal community -- settled in the 17th century when its tall trees made sturdy masts for merchant sloops -- has been fending off efforts to shut down the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

But now, as the Pentagon prepares to eliminate dozens of domestic military installations and consolidate many others in what is expected to be the largest round of base closings in U.S. history, and the first in a decade, the salt air again is thick with trepidation.

"We know that some people think the writing is on the wall for us," said Paul O'Connor, an electrician who joined his father more than 30 years ago at the Navy's oldest continuously operated shipyard and now heads its largest union, the Metal Trades Council. "It weighs heavy, no doubt about that."

His concern is being echoed in military enclaves across the country, where intense lobbying efforts are underway in advance of a May 16 deadline for the Defense Department to unveil its list of recommended closings. A presidential commission charged with overseeing the process will make its decisions by Sept. 8.

This year marks the last phase in the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission process, often referred to as "BRAC," an initiative designed to cut costs and reconfigure the military's Cold War-era force structure to address 21st century challenges by taking the politics out of shutting down military installations.

"We have through analyses that Congress asked us to do determined that we have significant excess capacity," said Philip W. Grone, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment. "BRAC gives us the opportunity to efficiently and effectively rationalize our force structure to our mission needs."

Over four rounds of base closings -- 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 -- 97 major installations, and hundreds of smaller ones, were scrapped, saving the government nearly \$29 billion as of 2003, according to the Government Accountability Office. The Pentagon says it still has 24 percent more base capacity than it needs.

Because of the concentration of military facilities in the Washington area, several could be closed or combined with other installations, military analysts said. In the last round, Virginia's Fort Pickett Army base was targeted along with Maryland's Fort Ritchie, near the Pennsylvania border, and the Naval Surface Warfare Center in White Oak.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld recently suggested that the final tally of closures could be smaller than previously believed -- perhaps fewer than 20 percent of the remaining 425 U.S. bases -- because of the tens of thousands of troops stationed abroad who are expected to be relocated to the United States in coming years.

"Regardless, it's going to be a fairly draconian operation, more severe than anything we have seen before," said Loren B. Thompson, chief operating officer of the Lexington Institute in Arlington, Va. "They are looking for savings on the scale of \$7 billion a year. This is the big one."

The official criteria on which the Defense Department's decisions are to be made include military value, economic savings, and community and environmental considerations. In past rounds the base closure commission has accepted the vast majority of Pentagon recommendations.

States and communities that stand to lose thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in economic impact have stepped up efforts to save their bases, employing grass-roots tactics and high-profile lobbying in Washington.

In California, which has lost 29 bases since BRAC began, more than any other state, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) appointed former congressman and President Bill Clinton Chief of Staff Leon E. Panetta to head a committee to make recommendations about how to retain bases.

Gov. Mitt Romney (R) signed a bill in February authorizing Massachusetts to borrow \$262 million to expand the Natick Soldier Systems Center and Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, which employ more than 30,000 people. Both are believed to be candidates for closure.

Florida has tapped a firm led by former House majority leader Richard K. Armey (R-Tex.) to try to safeguard its 21 bases.

Sen. Trent Lott (R-Miss.) -- whose state's residents are concerned about shipyards at Pascagoula and other installations -- attempted to delay a vote on President Bush's nominee to chair the nine-member commission that will consider the Pentagon's recommendations.

But Bush outflanked Lott by giving chairman Anthony J. Principi, a former secretary of veteran's affairs, and eight other members recess appointments, negating the requirement of Senate confirmation.

"The reason they appoint a commission is that closing bases is too politically sensitive for Congress to want to be responsible," said ret. Navy Capt. Peter Bowman, who served on the 1993 closure commission and

commanded the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard from 1987 to 1990. "The lobbying and the grass-roots stuff can make an impression, but it is not enough to save a base."

Founded in 1800 on an island in the Piscataqua River -- which separates Maine from New Hampshire -- Portsmouth Naval Shipyard resembles a New England village with its red brick buildings and central green.

Its main function is to refuel and refit the Navy's Los Angeles-class attack submarines, which are expected to be phased out in favor of the newer Virginia class. The Navy recently announced plans to reduce its attack submarine fleet to 41 from its current 55.

"Clearly, Portsmouth's mission area, its most important competency, is shrinking," Thompson said. "And with the focus of military competition shifting from the North Atlantic to the Pacific and Indian oceans, we'd prefer to have these competencies on the West Coast."

Employing nearly 5,000 workers, down from a high of about 20,000 after World War II, Portsmouth has survived several closure attempts, including the 1995 BRAC round. Proponents of the facility call it the most efficient of the navy's four remaining shipyards, citing its award-winning safety record and ability to return submarines to the sea more quickly and cheaply than rivals.

"By almost any measure, we have the best shipyard in the world, there is no doubt about that," said retired Navy Capt. William McDonough, who in the 1970s served as the commanding officer at Portsmouth and now heads a group called Save Our Shipyard. "But look at the others. Norfolk [Virginia] is in the middle of the biggest Navy base in the world. Pearl Harbor is the headquarters of the Pacific Fleet. Bremerton [Washington] happens to be the only one that can dispose of nuclear components. Then there is Portsmouth."

Efforts to save the Yard, as locals call it, are now in high gear. Legislators in Maine and New Hampshire have authorized more than \$125,000 to aid the fight to keep the base. The two states' congressional delegations have written letters to Rumsfeld touting its performance. Local newspapers have organized a letter-writing campaign, generating thousands they plan to hand-deliver to the Pentagon in the coming weeks.

But the town of Kittery is simultaneously preparing for the worst, securing a \$175,000 federal grant to hire a consultant who specializes in preparing communities for life after a base closes.

At the Navy Yard Bar & Billiards, which begins filling up with shipyard workers just after 3 p.m. most weekday afternoons, bartender Diane McGraw said she expected hers and other local businesses to struggle if the base closes.

Shipyard worker Tom Kuchaski said he is turning 50 this year and plans to buy a house for the first time. But he is waiting to see if he will keep his job supervising submarine mechanics.

"It's a bit of a roller-coaster. We hear one thing one day, and another thing the next," he said. "It's out of our hands now. All we can do is wait."

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot
April 9, 2005

Group Fights For Hornets' Removal

By Jack Dorsey and Kate Wiltout

VIRGINIA BEACH — As communities across the country fight to protect their military bases, a civic group upset about jet noise said Friday it will ask the federal base realignment and closure commission to move the Navy's combat jets from Oceana Naval Air Station to another East Coast base.

Kim Johnson, chairman of Citizens Concerned About Jet Noise, said her group wants the federal commission to relocate all of Oceana's F/A-18 Hornet and Super Hornet jets and to use the base for other military functions.

The secretary of Defense will release a list of recommendations for closure and realignment to the nine-member commission by May 16. The commission then has until Sept. 8 to make its own recommendations to the White House.

"It was a very tough decision to make," said Johnson, whose organization has long called for changes in Oceana operations but until now had not advocated that the jets be moved. "We have been laboring over it for quite some time."

In a message from its board of directors, CCAJN (pronounced "Cajun") said its decision to approach the commission is the first major policy change in its seven-year history.

Previously, the group asked that some squadrons be shifted to other bases and that a second outlying practice landing field be built to take pressure off a similar field at Fentress in Chesapeake.

The Navy is attempting to build a landing field in Washington County, N.C., but faces opposition from landowners and environmentalists.

Some state and city officials dismissed CCAJN's latest move as a publicity stunt.

"It's the premier Navy air facility on the East Coast," said George Foresman, an assistant to Gov. Mark R. Warner. "You just don't wake up one morning and say 'We're going to turn it into something else.'"

Others said the effort won't make a difference.

"I think most of the big decisions have already been made" on base closure and realignment, said Bob Mathias, assistant to the Beach city manager.

Many communities and states are lobbying to protect job-generating local bases from closure or consolidation, which the government is pursuing to save money.

While CCAJN says it favors a new military use for Oceana, supporters of keeping the Navy's carrier-based jets in Virginia Beach say that relocating the fighter jets could doom the base.

"If the Navy bought their position, what would they put at Oceana?" asked retired Rear Adm. Fred Metz, a former aviator who frequently advocates that the city and Navy work harder on noise and encroachment issues surrounding the base.

"They think there is something else that could take the Hornets' place, but they don't say what that is," Metz said. "I don't like their position. It's not realistic."

Johnson wouldn't say what other purpose the base could serve if the jets left.

"Right now there are just so many possibilities," she said. "We are not commenting on exact uses at this time."

Johnson doesn't believe the Navy would simply abandon Oceana, even if its mission changed. "It is too important to the military," she said.

She said CCAJN was prompted to make its decision because the Beach City Council has not yet said it would strictly honor development limitations that the Pentagon wants around the airfield. The group's statement also cited the federal injunction against the proposed landing field in North Carolina as another reason for its new position.

Mathias said asking the government to “realign” the base isn’t much different from asking it close Oceana outright.

John Shick , a retired Navy captain and member of CCAJN’s board of director s, said that’s not the case. Finding a less intensive military use for Oceana could benefit the city, the military and residents.

“It’s almost surprising this hasn’t been discussed before,” he said.

Metz said that if the Navy was forced to move its planes from Oceana, it wouldn’t need the base. It already has helicopters and E-2C Hawkeye radar planes at the Norfolk Naval Station and would not move them to the Beach, he said.

Nor would the Navy want to move its P-3 Orion patrol planes from other bases, Metz added.

But Shick said even if the Navy wouldn’t need Oceana, another branch of the military might.

Richard Maddox , a City Council member who represents the Oceanfront, said CCAJN is trying to generate publicity by approaching the commission.

“I think they’ve almost discredited themselves,” he said.

The group claims to represent about 5,000 Hampton Roads residents, but Maddox said he sees or hears from only four board members in discussions about jet noise at Oceana and gets almost no other calls or e-mails about the issue.

“I just don’t think they represent who they claim to represent,” he said.

CQ Weekly
April 11, 2005
Pg. 875

In Time, A Silver Lining For Many Closed Bases

By John M. Donnelly, CQ Staff

Hundreds of communities across the United States that play host to military bases are bracing for a government decision that may alter their financial well-being and fundamentally change the lives of their residents.

Next month, the Pentagon will recommend a new list of bases to be closed or reduced in size — the fifth round of an almost two-decade restructuring effort to save money by eliminating excess capacity. The Pentagon estimates that up to 20 percent of its 3,800 bases in the United States and its territories are superfluous. Military facilities range from the 470 square-mile Edwards Air Force Base in California to the 11-acre Volk Field Air National Guard base in Wisconsin.

Some are large enough to employ thousands of civilian workers, and those often drive local economies. Because of the potentially adverse effects of losing a prominent employer, community leaders and their congressional representatives hope to persuade the official Base Realignment and Closure commission, or BRAC, to keep their bases off the hit list.

But there is evidence that officials would be better advised to assume the worst and embrace it. According to a study by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the investigative arm of Congress, many communities caught up in the shuttering of 97 bases since 1988 have been able to turn their losses to economic advantage. Most have fared better economically over time than the country as a whole. The study focused on 62 affected communities.

“In the short run, some sectors of the local economy will be hurt. But experience shows that in the long run, a closing base lifts all boats,” said Jeremiah Gertler, an analyst with the 1995 BRAC commission.

The January GAO study shows that in many places, base-related jobs that were lost have been mostly recouped through private and public ventures using the former military facilities.

For other affected communities, the recovery has been slow. Some, particularly those in rural areas, remain especially hard hit. Others are only now showing signs of revival. Conversely, in places where bases either contributed little to the local economy or were dwarfed by more powerful economic engines, closings generally haven’t had a significant effect.

But overall, the study shows, communities that lost bases are rebounding: 69 percent of these communities had unemployment rates in the first half of 2004 equal to or less than the national average, and 48 percent enjoyed greater per capita income growth from 1999 through 2001 than the national average.

Driving both of those statistics is the underlying fact that of almost 130,000 civilian Pentagon jobs lost due to base closings, 72 percent have been replaced by new enterprises located on the sites of the former facilities, the GAO said. Moreover, not only are people still working, but the businesses that supplanted the military pay taxes to their local governments, as Uncle Sam never did.

“Military jobs don’t have anywhere close to the positive impact on a region as civilian jobs,” said Donald Owen, director of capital projects and planning for Glenview, Ill., outside Chicago, where the Pentagon ordered the closing of Glenview Naval Air Station in 1993.

Common Themes

According to base closure experts, community leaders and development specialists, the strategies of towns that successfully rebounded from the loss of their bases in previous rounds included several common themes.

First, they assumed that their bases could be closed and organized public and private stakeholders behind a plan to transform the facilities to civilian use. Next, their plans mirrored some of the functions of the base. For example, if the base had an airstrip, the plan included a civilian airport. Last, the plans strove to incorporate the transformed base into the local economy as much as possible.

One of the most successful communities to bounce back from the loss of a base is Denver, where Lowry Air Force Base was ordered shut in 1991. Besides its location on the outskirts of the city, the base had several other advantages. No aircraft had flown there since 1965. Instead, the 2.8-square-mile base was home to an intelligence school and training facilities. As a result, the surrounding community grew right up to the base boundary. There were also no jet fuels or other aircraft wastes to clean up.

To be sure, Lowry’s closing hurt the host community. Denver lost about 7,000 jobs and \$295 million a year in annual spending, said Tom Markham, executive director of the Lowry Redevelopment Authority.

But with planning, the facility made a successful transition to civilian use. The former base now is the site of 4,500 new houses, more than a square mile of parkland, two community colleges and several other schools. It also boasts 2 million square feet of retail shops, banks and medical facilities, a veterans’ center and an ice skating rink. About 12,000 people live and work at the Lowry site today, contributing \$4 billion annually to the area’s economy, Markham said.

“There is life after closure,” he said.

Another success story is Glenview, Ill. The town’s 1.8-square-mile Naval Air Station once provided jobs to 2,012 civilian and military employees, with an additional 2,954 reservists working there part-time. The base contributed \$165 million a year to the local economy, said Owen, the town’s economic planner.

Today, Owen said, the former base is home to light industry, offices, retail stores, residences, golf courses, a large lake, parkland and a train station to ferry commuters 20 miles away to Chicago. The transformed facility has created 5,000 jobs and funnels \$1.6 billion into the local economy — a tenfold increase.

Glenview also had a leg up to ease its transformation. The base was officially incorporated into the town, so Glenview officials alone could plan how to use the property once the decision to close was made. Glenview held about 200 community meetings, Owen said, making sure to involve school, public and private interests in the plan for reusing the facility.

As a result of that spadework, the transformation planning process took Glenview just 18 months, instead of the years it has taken other localities. It also helped that environmental cleanup issues were minimal.

Climbing Back Slowly

The communities that surround Fort Ord, a former Army base in Northern California, exemplify a different kind of success. Before Fort Ord was ordered closed in 1991, the base, which sprawls across 44 square miles between Monterey and Salinas, served as a light infantry training facility and was home to 16,000 soldiers and 7,500 civilians.

Today, the communities surrounding the base are getting back on their feet, though not as swiftly as Lowry or Glenview did. The former base now hosts the 4,000-student California State University at Monterey and an extension of the University of California at Santa Cruz, as well as the Marina Municipal Airport, golf courses, hotels, residences and retail stores.

Still, following a decade of redevelopment, only 25 percent of Fort Ord's transformation plan has been completed, with about \$7 billion worth of additional construction scheduled, said Michael A. Houlemard Jr., executive officer of the Fort Ord Reuse Authority.

So far, about 1,800 jobs have been created there — a fraction of the workforce the base once sustained. And while Fort Ord annually pumped \$500 million into the local economy, its new businesses contributed just \$100 million in 2004.

Compared with Glenview and Lowry, however, Fort Ord presented far bigger transformation challenges. In addition to its sheer size, the base required a \$70 million cleanup of asbestos and lead in 1,100 buildings, a process that will require several more years to complete, Houlemard said.

Also slowing the transformation were disputes among four neighboring communities over a plan for the facility's reuse. That plan then had to be coordinated with the Army, a process that took six years, Houlemard said.

But with redevelopment now moving at full throttle, Houlemard is optimistic that the former base will match its pre-closure economic output. "It will get to \$500 million and more by the time we're done," he said.

Meanwhile, the citizens of Anniston, in eastern Alabama, have only begun to regain their economic footing since the Army ordered Fort McClellan closed in 1995.

Formerly home to a military police facility and a school training soldiers to defend against chemical and biological attacks, Fort McClellan employed 5,000 people on its 34 square miles. Since the Army left, only about half that number of jobs have been recouped, said Miki Schneider, planning director for the area's redevelopment organization.

Sherri Sumners, president of the Chamber of Commerce for Calhoun County, said many of the lost jobs were held by Pentagon and Army employees who were transferred elsewhere when Fort McClellan closed.

"At least when a plant closes, the people are still there . . . buying groceries and putting gas in their car," she said. "It's not only 5,000 jobs that are lost, but 5,000 residents are gone."

By several accounts, Anniston was slow to organize its response to the base closing. Fort McClellan had been spared in previous rounds, and community officials saw it as immune rather than imperiled, said Gertler, the former BRAC analyst who served on the staff of the commission that shuttered McClellan.

Patrick O'Brien, head of the Pentagon's Office of Economic Adjustment, which helps communities affected by base closings, said problems with unexploded ordnance and the surrounding area's relatively slow economic growth rate also retarded Anniston's recovery.

But even Anniston has begun to bounce back, O'Brien and others said. A national wildlife refuge occupies 14 square miles of the former base. The rest of the area is punctuated with restaurants, an arts center and an outdoor symphony series. The former base also hosts the Department of Homeland Security's Center for Domestic Preparedness, where police and firefighters from around the country train to handle chemical and biological agents.

Anniston still houses an Army depot, one of the facilities that might be closed this year. The depot builds and overhauls combat vehicles bound for Iraq and Afghanistan, a role town officials hope will help spare it in the upcoming round.

After 10 years, Sumners said, she realizes that Anniston will survive the closing of Fort McClellan. But she would prefer not to repeat the experience in 2005. "It's somebody else's turn this round," she said.

Boston Globe
April 11, 2005

Letters Back Keeping Shipyard Open

A letter-writing campaign in support of sparing the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard from the upcoming round of base closings has produced nearly 9,000 letters. Organizers plan to send the letters to the Pentagon next week and hope to send a second batch in May. They have been sending daily faxes of some letters to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. Captain William McDonough, a retired shipyard commander, said last week that community support was something Rumsfeld needed to be made aware of, even though it is not among the criteria considered for closing or keeping bases. Portsmouth is at risk to close as the Pentagon prepares to shutter or scale back a quarter of about 425 military facilities nationwide this year. The effort, the first to save money in 10 years, is part of the transformation of the military following the Cold War.

--AP

Denver Post
April 11, 2005

Wyo. Looks To Shield AF Base

By Associated Press

Cheyenne - City and state officials are working to enhance the mission and responsibilities of Frances E. Warren Air Force Base in hopes of insulating its \$200 million annual payroll from future rounds of military base closures.

The base, on the west edge of town, is one of Cheyenne's top employers, with about 3,600 military personnel and 900 civilian workers.

The base's economic impact locally is estimated to be \$262 million a year, including \$15.6 million in expenditures in the 2004 fiscal year and \$46.2 million in "indirect jobs" created, in addition to its \$200 million payroll.

By May 16, the Pentagon is scheduled to identify another group of military bases to be closed or realigned, joining 97 that have been eliminated since 1988.

About 20 percent of the 425 remaining bases could be on the list, experts say.

While local and state officials don't expect Warren to be among the bases closed, they're working to bring other military personnel, such as the National Guard, to the base to keep it from being closed in the future.

Sen. Craig Thomas, R-Wyo., calls the idea of bringing multiple branches of service together at one installation "jointness."

The oldest continuously active military installation in the Air Force, Warren is one of only three missile bases left in the United States.

The others are at Minot, N.D., and Great Falls, Mont.

All three remain important strategically, said state Rep. Pete Illoway, R-Cheyenne, a former chairman and member of the Military Affairs Committee of the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce.

U.S. Rep. Barbara Cubin, R-Wyo., last year worked to help move up the release date for the base "hit list," rather than wait one or two more years. She did that because she was confident Warren won't be on the list this year, said her press secretary, Joe Milczewski.

"Right now, Warren is as safe as a baby in its bed, I guess," he said.

News & Observer, The (Raleigh, NC)
April 11, 2005

Little divulged on base closings

By Jay Price

It's billed as the biggest round of military **base** closings in U.S. history. It might be the most secretive, too.

Little more than a month before the Pentagon releases its proposal, information about which **bases** will be shut or reconfigured is mostly guesswork. That means state and local officials in North Carolina are parsing comments from military leaders as carefully as stockbrokers dissect the Delphic pronouncements of Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan.

Amid the swirl of rumors and speculation, a rare hard fact surfaced late last month when Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld backed away from estimates that up to a quarter of the nation's **base** capacity would be closed. Instead, the number would be less than 20 percent, he said, because a plan to close some overseas **bases** will bring thousands of troops back to the United States.

"It was good news for all of us," said Troy Pate of Goldsboro, co-chairman of the Governor's Commission on Military Affairs. "Beyond that, who knows? Rumsfeld is playing it close to the vest."

Even at this late date, state leaders are still polishing North Carolina's image as an attentive host to the military. Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue made public a package of legislation last month designed to support troops stationed in the state.

The Pentagon will release its proposed list of **bases** to be closed or to get new missions by May 16. A federal commission named by President Bush in March will then review the list before presenting its recommendations to Bush on Sept. 8.

Bush can approve the recommendations or send them back for modification before passing them on to Congress. Congress can either approve or reject the list but can't modify it.

Officials in North Carolina say they have not been told that any specific **base** is at risk. But because Camp Lejeune and Fort Bragg, the two largest, are widely considered to be immune, concern surrounds Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station in Havelock and its Naval Air Depot, as well as Seymour Johnson Air Force **Base** in Goldsboro.

Plenty on the line

The stakes are high. High-paying jobs are scarce in Eastern North Carolina. The depot, an aircraft repair plant, employs 4,000 civilians at an average annual salary of nearly \$50,000. Seymour Johnson brings nearly 15,000 jobs and \$800 million a year to the state's economy, state leaders say.

Across the state, there are more than 100,000 troops and 20,000 civilian workers at six major **bases**, which generate an estimated \$18 billion for the economy, according to a 2004 study funded by the state.

In some states, fears run higher because of obvious problems at **bases**, such as encroaching development. More homes close to **bases** mean more complaints -- and even lawsuits -- about noise from sources such as aircraft or artillery.

North Carolina has been working for years to protect its **bases**. Among other things, state and local officials moved early to limit encroachment, starting joint land-use studies with the military around each large **base** and helping to buy land for bigger buffers.

Pentagon officials have repeatedly said no **base** was beyond scrutiny, but the state's two largest -- the Army's Fort Bragg in Fayetteville and the Marines' Camp Lejeune -- are widely believed to be safe and perhaps even poised to gain from closings elsewhere.

One possibility, said Hugh Overholt, a New Bern lawyer who works for a group trying to protect Cherry Point, is that the depot could end up on the list for "**realignment**." The Pentagon's **Base Realignment and Closure** Commission is under orders to carefully scrutinize the nation's air depots, particularly for functions that could be moved elsewhere.

Many factors at work

Among the many wild cards is the problem with encroaching development at Oceana Naval Air Station in fast-growing Virginia Beach. Encroachment there is said to be among the worst of any military airfield in the nation, and more than 2,000 homeowners have sued the federal government seeking compensation.

If the jets based there have to be moved, they could go to Cherry Point, which is already expected to split several squadrons of new F/A-18 Super Hornets with Oceana. That would not only help Cherry Point dodge the list, but would bring millions of dollars a year to the Havelock area.

Pate, who has close ties to the Seymour Johnson **base**, said that community leaders there have been told that the Air Force clearly wants to keep the **base**, which is home to a wing of F-15E Strike Eagles that have played central roles in fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. The thinking among Department of Defense leaders, though, has been impossible to read.

He hopes the **base's** attributes help its chances. These include proximity to the massive Dare bombing range, which the **base** runs, and Fort Bragg. It's also the backup deployment **base** for Bragg's 82nd Airborne Division.

The Air Force has spent more than \$100 million on updates to the **base** in recent years, and that could help, too, he said.

Perdue has spearheaded the state's campaign to protect the **bases**. The various measures in her recently proposed omnibus bill weren't earthshaking -- one of the biggest was to earmark taxes from gasoline sold on military **bases** for services for military families and to protect **bases** from encroachment -- but they didn't have to be, said Leigh Harvey McNairy, Perdue's liaison for military matters. As several Pentagon officials have told Perdue, the state already has a proven reputation for being friendly to the military.

"At this point, it's not about theatrics; it's not fireworks," she said. "You just want to show the same steady progress."

Kansas City Star, The (MO)
April 10, 2005

States scramble to defend military bases from closing

By Matt Stearns

WASHINGTON - It might be Washington's most reviled acronym: BRAC.

It stands for **Base Realignment and Closure**, the Defense Department's occasional effort to pare its far-flung, expensive-to-operate infrastructure.

Since 1988, four BRAC rounds have shut down 97 **bases** nationwide. Savings: about \$28.9 billion.

In 2005, BRAC is back. This time it could be bigger than ever: The Pentagon wants to both save money and transform the way it prepares to fight wars. It says the United States' 425 military **bases** are about a quarter more than what is needed.

The Pentagon previously said closing that much excess capacity could save an estimated \$7 billion a year, but it has since backed off those numbers.

The Pentagon's savings, however, can mean a bombshell for neighboring communities.

"If you look at the size of the installation in most of the areas, it is an important economic force," said John Armbrust, executive director of Kansas' Strategic Military Planning Commission, a group of politicians and community leaders appointed by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius to help protect Kansas **bases**, which represent \$2 billion a year in payroll and contracts to the economy.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld asserted recently that early estimates of unneeded **bases** seemed to be overstated, but Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has said that "there definitely will be some closings."

The process works like this: In May, the Pentagon will present its recommendations for **closure** and **realignment** to Congress and a presidential commission. That commission, appointed last month, will examine the recommendations, potentially tweak them, and present its list to President Bush by Sept. 8.

If Bush approves the list, it is final unless Congress votes down the entire list within 45 days. The process is supposed to be nonpolitical, with decisions based on the military value of sites.

There is little that states can do to affect the process. But congressmen work hard to try to protect **bases** by enhancing their military value -- and that is where Missouri and Kansas benefit from having high-ranking members of Congress on key committees.

In Missouri, Ike Skelton is the ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee. In the Senate, Jim Talent serves on the Armed Services Committee and Kit Bond is on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee.

In Kansas, Pat Roberts is a senior member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and Sam Brownback serves on the Senate Military Construction Appropriations Subcommittee. On the House side, Todd Tiahrt is on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and Jim Ryun is on the Armed Services Committee.

A key way has been by emphasizing "jointness," or the idea that missions at the **bases** are useful to all branches of the military. And the more money and missions are at a **base**, the less likely it is it will be closed - or so the congressional delegation hopes.

For example, in Missouri, Fort Leonard Wood last year received \$10 million to build a Countermine Training Complex and \$15 million to build a training complex on dealing with weapons of mass destruction.

Whiteman Air Force **Base** is home to the nation's highly specialized B-2 bomber fleet and a Reserve A-10 ground-support fighter unit.

Another Missouri installation closer to Kansas City is Rosecrans Memorial Airport in St. Joseph, home to the 139th Airlift Wing of the Air National Guard, which provides training and support for C-130 cargo planes. Rosecrans received \$8 million in 2003 for a new air traffic control training center.

Kansas has four significant military **bases**: Fort Riley, Fort Leavenworth, McConnell Air Force **Base** in Wichita and Forbes Field near Topeka.

"I think, working with the state, the different communities, we've tried to address any deficiencies" at the **bases** that could hinder their prospects, said Roberts, who recently toured Fort Riley with Army Lt. Gen. James J. Lovelace Jr., the director of the Army staff. That sprawling central Kansas facility has been mentioned as a possible home for Army units being shifted from Germany.

While Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth are expanding, some in the delegation express concern over Forbes Field, another Air National Guard **base**. Roberts said he had suggested to the Pentagon that it add more missions, particularly in the area of homeland security.

"Forbes is a strategic asset to the nation," said Tod Bunting, the adjutant general of Kansas, citing the field's 13,000-foot runway. "There's not that many of them, especially in a central location that have the airspace to go with it. ... You can have a robust operation out here without displacing anybody or worrying about encroachment issues."

States haven't just left it to their congressional delegations to ensure that their **bases** are kept open or expanded. Many have hired lobbyists and consultants in the last couple of years. Some states offer incentives, such as tax breaks and local infrastructure improvements.

The Kansas commission, with a \$1 million budget, has developed a DVD extolling the virtues of the state and its **bases** to send to BRAC staff. Kansas also pays a monthly retainer to two Washington consulting and lobbying firms to help make its case for its **bases**, Armbrust said.

John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org, a Washington defense policy think tank, said he was unsure whether all such BRAC-avoidance efforts would be helpful, because in a time of war, the BRAC process might not be necessary.

In the post-Cold War period, "you could understand how there was excess capacity, because the Army went from 18 divisions to 10," Pike said.

But now "I don't see any military **bases** where anybody is hanging out reading old magazines because they don't have anything to do," he said. "They're all busy doing military stuff."

Defense Department spokesman Glenn Flood, however, notes that "in a time of war, it's all the more important to save money."

Pentagon plans could also be hindered by a brewing fight with Congress over whether National Guard **bases** can be considered for **closure**.

Guard **bases** are under control of the states, but many - if not most - get federal funding.

The Defense Department's opinion is that as long as they get federal funding, "they could be looked at as part of the overall capacity," Flood said.

Recently, however, House Speaker Dennis Hastert, an Illinois Republican, and Sen. Richard Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, wrote a letter to Rumsfeld pointing out that BRAC law specifically states that National Guard units cannot be moved or changed without permission of the state's governor.

Asked how that would be handled, Flood said he could not speak for the BRAC commission, which just began work.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)
April 10, 2005

'A business blessing'

Military shuffling to boost population of Columbus area, but strain services

By Ron Martz

Columbus -- From his office on the east side of I-185, Rob Doll can't quite see the future of this city, but he knows where it is.

The future is just a few miles away, at the southern end of the interstate highway at Fort Benning, one of the Army's key training facilities and the economic engine that drives the region.

Across the country, many communities are breaking out in a cold sweat over the prospect that their **bases** may show up on the Pentagon's chopping block in little more than six weeks.

But this post, which calls itself "Home of the Infantry" is about to grow. And as Fort Benning grows, so too will Columbus, Phenix City, Ala., and other nearby communities in west-central Georgia and eastern Alabama.

"It's a blessing, a business blessing," said Doll, owner of Rob Doll Nissan and an Army veteran of Vietnam.

Over the next 18 months, 5,400 additional soldiers will be permanently based here.

The majority, about 3,500, will be from the 5th Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division.

The others will be added to a variety of units, including about 900 more trainers. That will push the **base's** military population to more than 40,000.

The population of Columbus-Phenix City, including the new soldiers and their families, is expected to jump by more than 15,000, said Mayo "Biff" Hadden III, senior vice president of the Columbus Chamber of Commerce.

"It's a great economic shot in the arm," said Hadden.

But with that economic boom will come crowded schools -- especially in Muscogee County -- a housing pinch, increased traffic and a strain on child care services.

Those anticipated problems could get even worse if Fort Benning adds military personnel from other installations in Europe and throughout the United States as a result of this year's round of Pentagon-mandated **base** closings. The list of recommended **closures** will be made public on May 16.

Hadden is spearheading the region's efforts to prepare for the growth and head off potential problems through a coalition of community leaders known as the Fort Benning Futures Partnership.

The cooperation here has been cited by one national organization as a model for other communities where military **bases** might grow.

"What they have done is create a pretty useful model for other communities dealing with expansion," said Tim Ford, executive director of the Association of Defense Communities, which works with military communities on **base closures** and expansion.

Influx in Savannah, too

Fort Stewart, home of the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), near Savannah, is facing similar growth problems, though not of the same magnitude as Fort Benning's.

Billy Edwards, the city manager for Hinesville, said the division grew from 18,000 to 22,000 soldiers between spring and summer last year as it added a fourth combat brigade. By the time the unit left for Iraq in January, it had 24,000 soldiers.

Many of the soldiers did not bring their families, Edwards said.

But when the unit returns from Iraq early next year, the families are expected to move, increasing the population of Hinesville and surrounding communities and counties by at least 8,000.

That means more housing, more schools and more child care, just like Columbus. A joint land-use study is being conducted, and housing surveys are under way that are expected to present several scenarios for planners to consider to handle the growth.

"We're guardedly optimistic we'll see growth as opposed to diminution," Edwards said. "But you have to be prepared, and we're planning our infrastructure to handle that growth."

At Fort Benning, deputy garrison commander Chuck Walls said he would welcome even more growth.

"We're standing up with our arms open saying we've got space. We've got 184,000 acres here, and you'll never get that kind of acreage again," said Walls.

Fort Benning has become the single source of training for the Army's infantry. Last year, about 15,000 infantry soldiers trained at the post. This year that number will jump to 25,000, said Walls. Over the next three years, a total of 23,000 additional infantry trainees will be added to the Army to meet demands in Iraq and Afghanistan.

All will come through Fort Benning. And while the trainees have little impact on the local economy, those needed to train them do.

The trainers are usually senior enlisted, many of them married with children.

Walls said no new housing will be added to the 4,000 units already on-**base**, which means most of the new soldiers will have to find places to live off-post.

"We now [build] about 450 spec homes a year. We've got to get that to over 1,000 spec homes a year for the next two years," said the chamber of commerce's Hadden.

In addition, Hadden said, it is estimated that 1,600 more apartment units will be needed to accommodate the new troops and their families.

One of the keys to the construction is managing it in a way that it does not encroach on the **base** or its missions, said Hadden.

A joint land-use study is now in the works that will provide recommendations for long-term growth around the **base**, he added.

The additional recruits and the new brigade will be housed on-**base** in modular facilities. The brigade will eventually get about \$400 million worth of permanent structures, but that will be over a 10-year period.

School crunch on way

Local schools will feel a crunch for the next few years as the new students hit town with their soldier parents. But until the houses and apartments are built, the school systems will not know where new schools will be needed, so temporary classrooms are being planned.

Officials here say Muscogee County is likely to be hit hardest by the influx of new students.

Robin Pennock, deputy superintendent for the Muscogee County School District, said her system could receive as many as 3,800 of the 4,700 new students. That would be more than 10 percent growth in 18 months.

"We are very excited and positive about this, but we do face some challenges," said Pennock.

Among those challenges are not knowing where the children will live or what grades they will be in. And that means school officials do not know how many more teachers in any particular grade will be needed.

Pennock said a rough estimate of the cost for additional teachers, portable classrooms, textbooks and other school supplies "could be well in excess of \$25 million," about \$15 million of which would come from state funds.

"We know we can handle the housing, and we are comfortable we can handle the education piece, although it will take us about three years to bring it fully online. If we do this right, we come out the winner and soldiers come out the winner," said Hadden.

The new brigade originally was scheduled to get to Fort Benning this September. Instead, it will now be next September.

The extra time, said Hadden, will enable area officials to more carefully plan for a complex situation that will have a major social and economic impact on the region.

Christian Science Monitor
April 12, 2005
Pg. 1

Pentagon's Long List Of Bases To Close

Next month's proposal for the biggest-ever round of cuts could transform both the military and many communities.

By Mark Sappenfield, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON – As the Pentagon prepares to embark on its first base closings in a decade, it is already clear that this round will be unlike any that has come before, both in its scope and its intent.

The Defense Department has made no secret of the fact that this year's list of suggested closings figures to be the biggest in history. But unlike past rounds, when the process focused primarily on paring down a bloated military, the goal this year is largely to recast the military.

For 50 years, the United States aligned its bases against the Soviet foe, enfolding critical air squadrons in the safety of the heartland, and supporting America's military heft at massive industrial bases.

Now, in what could be a boost for bases as far afield as Guam and as close as the Carolinas, the diffuse threats of a new century call for a strategy of flexibility and quick deployment to the far reaches of the world.

As a result, the list presented to Congress May 16 is expected to be not only a way to cut costs, but also a way to reflect the changing character and shape of the military's mission.

"That is unique to this round," says Tim Ford, executive director of the Association for Defense Communities here. "What they're trying to do is much more broad. It's a transformation."

The transformation goes well beyond base closures. Under Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the military is in large part reinventing itself, shifting its emphasis from massive divisions toward smaller and more agile brigades. Base closures and realignments represent a way to make these changes adamant, replacing iron-cast cold-war installations with a more malleable network.

It is one of the Defense Department's strongest tools for change. Once the Pentagon presents its recommendations in May, an independent commission will look at the list and either revise it or endorse it unchanged. Then the Congress and the president must vote yes or no on the whole list; neither can make changes. The previous four rounds - in 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995 - closed 97 bases.

"Today's environment requires more agile, fast, and lean forces able to project power into theaters that may be distant from where they are based," said Philip Grone, a deputy undersecretary of Defense, in a statement to Congress last week. "This agility requires not only a shift in military forces, capabilities, and equipment, but also a new basing strategy."

The question, then, is which bases fit the Pentagon's new strategy. Not surprisingly, the Pentagon has said little. Many military installations employ thousands of civilians and infuse billions of dollars into local economies, so any leak would flood the Pentagon with lobbyists and legislators pleading for their bases.

Yet there are clues. When Secretary Rumsfeld earlier this year released his criteria for deciding which bases should be saved, cost came fourth. Before that were flexibility in dealing with fluctuating numbers of troops, space for training, and - No. 1 - the ability to respond to the needs of future missions, as well as the needs of the different branches of the military.

Almost certainly, future missions will value rapid response over the geographic isolation of the cold-war years, and that could change the footprint of America's bases. In one sense, the shift could benefit many American bases, since the Pentagon is likely to cut back on a number of major installations overseas in favor of smaller outposts dotted across the globe. Most of those troops will return to US bases.

The Pentagon had once suggested that it had as much as 24 percent excess capacity at its more than 400 bases. "The fact that we're bringing so many forces home from overseas reduces that number," said Rumsfeld in a recent briefing. A realignment of forces could occur within the US, as well, as the military gravitates toward coastal states - many with cheap land and supportive congressional delegations.

"Any favorably located place like Hawaii or ... the Carolinas will probably receive missions rather than lose them in the future," says Loren Thompson, a defense analyst at the Lexington Institute. "Contrast a base in the Carolinas with a base in the nation's interior, which is far from the coast and difficult to deploy."

The desire to have bases serve joint functions is perhaps one of the strongest clues to Rumsfeld's view of the future. For decades, the military branches - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines - have acted like fiefdoms, each working largely independently of the others. Rumsfeld wants a more seamless military, and putting

multiple branches on one base is seen as an efficient, potent way to recast the armed forces' culture and cooperation.

"The department is looking to maximize the utility of whatever base it has," says Jeremiah Gertler of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "They're looking for more flexibility and versatility."

In small ways, the process has already begun. Langley Air Force Base in Virginia is integrating active members of the Air Force with members of the Guard. Now the Air National Guard's 192nd Fighter Wing will train at Langley, even flying the new \$150 million FA-22 Raptor.

It's a small step, but one that may be indicative of the future.

"Looking at the challenges ahead, how do we integrate the Guard and Reserve more effectively?" asks Maj. Jeff Glenn of Langley's 1st Fighter Wing. "This is just a test case ... but maybe a mind-set changes."

Corpus Christi Caller-Times (TX)
April 11, 2005

BRAC brings question: Who gets land? - Amenities can make facilities attractive if Ingleside base closes

By Fanny S. Chirinos

The property housing Naval Station Ingleside may belong to the Port of Corpus Christi should the **base** be closed during this year's round of **base closures**, decided by a nine-member **Base Realignment and Closure** Commission.

BRAC's all-or-nothing recommendations will be sent by Sept. 8 to President George W. Bush for his approval. Navy insiders have suggested Naval Station Ingleside is high on the commission's list of targeted **bases** because it's a one-mission facility, and future technology may make the ships at the **base** obsolete. Insiders said Naval Air Station Corpus Christi and Naval Air Station Kingsville are unlikely to be closed.

If Naval Station Ingleside closes, the 984 acres of waterfront property it occupies will become available to varied parties, with the Port of Corpus Christi having the right of first refusal, said Greg Brubeck, deputy director of engineering services for the port.

The port helped negotiate the purchase of the land and did much of the legwork surrounding that deal, Brubeck said, adding that the price of buying back that land could be hundreds of millions of dollars.

"The staff would want the (port) commission to consider buying it," Brubeck said. "We would be interested in any property along the ship channel."

Navy Region South spokesman Lt. Rob Lyon said the Navy would not speculate as to what would happen to the land if the **base** were to close. Lyon said the Navy also would not speculate on whether the **base** would close or is being targeted.

Sue Cave, realtor and co-owner of Wilson Cave Realty in Ingleside, said the **base's** existing amenities raise the property value.

"You have a communal gym facility and pool, a grocery store, a convenience store and things like sewer lines," Cave said. "It would make an excellent gated community."

Cave said if the waterfront property were to sell now, it could cost an estimated \$150,000 per acre because of the development potential.

Ruben Bonilla, chairman of the port commission, said the port's first concern is to keep the **base** open but that it would be interested in the property should the **base** close.

He said whether or not the **base** closes, the port is interested in setting up humidity-controlled Army warehouses.

"That location is a strategic military port because of its proximity to military **bases** across the Southwest," he said. "The issue becomes one of cost. It may become a public and private venture."

Bonilla would not elaborate on how else the port would use the land should it become its owner.

The port already owns some 400 acres adjacent to the **base**. The land was purchased about four years ago in case of future naval **base** growth, Bonilla said.

"If the **base** closes, and we hope it doesn't, the port would have the right to buy it back at fair-market value," Brubeck said.

Should the port decide not to purchase the property, other parties would be interested including the city of Ingleside.

"There's been nothing but premature talk," said Ingleside Mayor Mike Rhea. "We're utilizing our resources to keeping it open. If it closes, we'll have to redirect."

San Patricio County Judge Terry Simpson said the county would have a definite interest.

"San Patricio (County) would have a great deal of interest in whatever happens to the property, regardless of who invests in it," Simpson said. "If the port passes on purchasing the land, we would be more than interested in having it revert back to the county."

The city of Beeville bought a portion of Naval Air Station Chase Field for \$623,000 after it closed in 1994. After its **closure**, the federal government decided to sell the land with the state having the right of first refusal. The Texas Department of Corrections and Justice bought 300 of the 1,792 acres.

It took five years before the city of Beeville was able to get the land title transferred in its name. The city then gave the land to the Beeville/Bee County Redevelopment Authority Corporation.

The corporation has created an industrial park and leases some of that property to a storage module-building manufacturer, said Joe B. Montez, director of economic development for the authority. There are ongoing discussions with aviation companies interested in leasing other portions of the land, Montez added.

"It's been a long process. Back then, no one had any experience in modern **base closures**, and the process took a while," Montez said. "Things may be different now, and the process could go more smoothly than it did 12 years ago."

Cathy Travis, press secretary for Congressman Solomon Ortiz, said it is too soon to consider a **base closure**.

"We are equally worried about all the **bases** facing a BRAC," Travis said.

Should the **base** close, implementation of the **closure** must occur within two years and completion of the **base closure** within six years, Lyon said.

"We're working extremely hard on this enterprise (keeping it open)," Lyon said. "I don't know if we can do without anything at this point. We are looking at a very active Navy."

Insight

Press of Atlantic City, The (NJ)

April 10, 2005

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT? / MILITARY BASE CLOSINGS / A LOOK AT ISSUES IN THE NEWS

By LISA HOFFMAN Scripps Howard News Service

Q: Why does the Pentagon believe **bases** must close?

A: Even after four previous rounds of closings beginning in 1988, in which 97 major installations were killed and about \$17 billion in savings generated, the 425 remaining **bases** are still too many, officials say.

While the Pentagon had been estimating that as much as 25 percent of those facilities could be deemed obsolete in the current round, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said recently the toll might actually be less than 20 percent.

As have a parade of defense chiefs before him, Rumsfeld said the death of a **base** does not doom a community, fond as it may be of the jobs and economic ripple effect an installation brings.

The Pentagon contends, keeping obsolete **bases** going is an unaffordable waste.

Q: Who is on the current **Base Realignment** and **Closure** committee?

A: It's headed by Anthony Principi, the Bush administration's first Veterans Affairs secretary. He has firsthand experience in dealing with the controversy spawned by closings, having presided over the shuttering of three veterans hospitals and cutbacks at other facilities.

Picked by Congress and the White House, the eight commissioners on the panel include two former congressmen; a former White House chief of staff who also ran the Transportation Department during the first President Bush's administration; three retired generals and one ex-admiral; and a former assistant defense secretary from the Clinton administration.

Q: What are the criteria that the Pentagon and the commission use to pick installations for extinction, consolidation or **realignment**?

A: The most important one is the **base's** military value. The top concern is whether and how well the facility fits into Rumsfeld's strategy to transform the military into a leaner, quicker and more high-tech force.

Further down on the criteria gauge: how much would be saved by closing the **base**, how long it would take to shut it down, the economic impact on the community and the environmental impact and cleanup costs expected.

Q: What **bases** will be on the list?

A: That's the \$7 billion question (that's how much the Pentagon says will be saved annually if 20 percent of the current **bases** are closed). The unofficial word is that the goal is to spread the pain by having each state take some sort of hit.

Generally, any installation that appeared on earlier Pentagon hit lists but managed to escape the Grim Reaper - such as Kirtland Air Force **Base** in New Mexico - has a better chance of making the list again than ones that never were targeted.

Maintenance, storage and ammunition depots also are likely to find themselves in the bull's-eye. So are Air National Guard facilities, such as the The Federal Aviation Administration's William J. Hughes Technical Center in Egg Harbor Township, home to the 177th fighter wing, that can be consolidated into nearby Air

Force **bases**. Laboratories, training ranges and other facilities now serving just one service may well be melded into a smaller number of facilities to be shared by other services.

One wrinkle is the 70,000 U.S. troops in Europe and South Korea who will be brought stateside in the future as a separate, overseas **base**-closing effort begins. Where they will be transferred has not been revealed, and assorted existing **bases** in Texas and elsewhere are pitching themselves as candidates for expansion.

Q: Once on the Pentagon death list, can a **base** win a reprieve?

A: It's possible, but unlikely. Officially, it takes a majority vote of the commission to spare a **base**. But in the past, the panel has approved about 85 percent of the closings recommended by the Pentagon.

On the other hand, it will take seven votes on the nine-person panel to add a **base** not targeted by the Pentagon to the list.

One facility that did win a reprieve from the commission in 1991 was Whidbey Island Naval Air Station near Seattle, where advocates were able to demonstrate that the Pentagon information used to target it was wrong.

Q: What happens next?

A: The thankless job of the commission begins in earnest. It will have until Sept. 8 to visit every facility recommended for **closure**, hold public hearings and review mountains of documents.

Its list of doomed facilities will then go to the White House, where President Bush will have until Sept. 23 to approve the entire list or reject it in full. This rule is designed to keep the White House from cherry-picking **bases** it would like to save, and is meant to shield the process from political influence.

After Bush acts this fall, Congress then will have a similar choice, which it must make by Nov. 7. The list will be considered final unless Capitol Hill rejects it entirely. If that happens, the commission will be directed to come up with another list.

Philadelphia Inquirer, The (PA)
April 9, 2005

**Community wants base to stay -
Area leaders say the Willow Grove Naval Air Station
is vital to the area. A base-closing study is pending.**

By Marc Schogol

Community leaders and elected officials have launched a preemptive strike to avert any possibility that the government might close the Willow Grove Naval Air Station and Joint Reserve **Base**.

A presidential commission appointed last month will review 425 stateside military **bases** and facilities and recommend those that should be eliminated or realigned.

When the last **base realignment** and **closure** review was conducted in 1994, Willow Grove was on the initial list of **bases** recommended for closing. But it fell off during the congressional approval process.

There is no indication that Willow Grove is on any endangered list. But the 1994 experience convinced the Suburban Horsham-Willow Grove Chamber of Commerce to form a Regional Military Affairs Committee

and apply to the state Department of Community and Economic Development last year for a \$55,000 grant, used in part to retain two independent consulting firms to muster facts and arguments just in case.

"We're really doing our due diligence to make sure we've done our homework in advance," said Edward Strouse, chamber vice president.

Strouse said the grant money was authorized as part of Gov. Rendell's economic-stimulus package approved by the legislature in December 2003.

This year, the package sets aside \$3.3 million specifically "to assist local defense organizations" in protecting active, reserve and National Guard positions that could be affected by the **base** closings.

Strouse would not say how much of the chamber's grant went to the consultants.

Yesterday, the chamber held a meeting to present results of the commissioned studies arguing that closing Willow Grove would have a damaging effect on the area's economy.

Sprawling over 1,200 acres on the Montgomery County-Bucks County border, Willow Grove is one of only three **bases** in the country that have Reserve and National Guard flight units from all the military services.

Established during World War II, it is the home **base** for about 5,000 reservists, 1,200 active-duty personnel, and 600 civilians. Many of its uniformed personnel have been activated for duty in and in support of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq.

At yesterday's breakfast meeting, the chamber urged civic and government leaders to unite to stress the vital economic and military reasons for keeping the **base** open.

The politicians in attendance, including U.S. Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D, Pa.) and several members of the state legislature, told the chamber that they supported their efforts.

"I understand how important the air station is to the community's economic vitality and also to security and national defense," said Schwartz, elected in November to represent the district.

"I'm going to work with you to do everything to keep Willow Grove open," she vowed.

In the current **base**-closing review, Willow Grove faces a number of deadlines.

On May 16, the Department of Defense will release a list of recommended **base** closings. Subsequently, the presidential commission will visit those facilities.

The commission must submit its report to the President by Sept. 8. Congress then has 45 days to approve or disapprove the recommendations.

Ike Puzon, president of Washington-based Puzon Associates, one of the two consulting groups, said the chamber should build a coalition before May 16.

Puzon was commander of the Naval Air Station in Atlanta in 1994 and successfully defended his **base** against a recommended shutdown at that time.

If the commission recommended closing Willow Grove, the chamber would be able to make its case directly to that panel.

"We're prepared to go to Washington if we're on the list," Strouse said. "Supporting this **base** is crucial."

Oregonian, The (Portland, OR)
April 8, 2005

BASE FEARS

By Harry Esteve

Summary: A pending round of **closures** raises insecurities at Oregon Air National Guard installations, both already on alert for homeland security

"We really have to change, as we always have, to keep up with changes on the battlefield and to keep up with changes in technology. How it will affect a given unit right now is really hard to tell." -- LT. COL. MIKE MILORD, SPOKESMAN FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU IN WASHINGTON, D.C
It's high anxiety time at Oregon's Air National Guard **bases** in Portland and Klamath Falls.

Not only are they on alert status, ready to scramble F-15 fighter jets at the first word of a terrorist threat, but they're waiting to learn whether they have a future.

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is scheduled to release his list of recommendations for military **base closures** by the middle of next month -- part of an effort to streamline and reorganize the armed forces. No one outside a tight circle at the Pentagon knows what **bases** are on the list, but reports have circulated that Air Guard **bases** around the nation could face the brunt of the cuts.

Oregon, with two Air Guard **bases** and little congressional clout, offers a tempting target.

"Everybody feels like they're going to lose out," said Col. Brad Applegate, commander of the 142nd Fighter Wing, based at Portland International Airport. The **base**, which also incorporates the 939th Air Refueling Wing, employs about 2,500 people in and full- and part-time jobs, with an annual payroll of about \$60 million.

Oregon has some things in its favor, including unlimited airspace over the Pacific Ocean for training, state-of-the-art equipment and accomplished pilots. But Applegate has no idea what will factor in Rumsfeld's decision.

"I wish I could tell you what's going to happen," Applegate said. "I can't."

Applegate and his fellow Air Guard commanders across the country are caught in the crossfire of a sweeping transformation of the military. Pentagon planners want to invest in the latest weapons technology, and they want to pay for it in part with savings achieved by mothballing the nation's aging fleet of jet fighters -- most of which have been passed from the active-duty Air Force to the Air Guard.

The Pentagon also wants a smaller Air Force, including the Guard, that would be concentrated in fewer **bases** and would become more reliant on newer F-22 fighters. But phasing out the older jets and merging Air Guard units with active duty units "could be very detrimental to the National Guard to the point of irreversible deterioration," Maj. Gen. David Rataczak, commander of the Arizona National Guard, wrote last month to Gen. John Jumper, U.S. Air Force chief of staff.

The **base** closings work like this: Rumsfeld gives his recommendations by May 16 to the **Base Realignment and Closure** Commission, which was appointed by President Bush. The commission reviews, and possibly amends, the list before sending it to Bush for approval. Once the president signs off, Congress has 45 days to vote it up or down. If Congress rejects the list, it goes back to Bush and Rumsfeld for revisions.

In the past, about 85 percent of the original recommendations have been closed. Internal National Guard documents, provided to The Oregonian, indicate Guard officials are worried that as many as 28 of 88 Air National Guard units could face **closure** or relocation.

In the same documents, Guard leaders complain that they were shut out of the process at first, and were brought in only after big decisions were made to dramatically shrink the number of fighter jets. They have turned to allies in Congress and to governors in hopes of curtailing, or at least slowing the pace of cutbacks.

After Guard commanders expressed concern that their air **bases** could be targeted, House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., signed a letter to Rumsfeld telling him no state Guard **bases** -- Army or Air -- could be closed without permission of the governor.

The March 24 letter, which also was signed by Democratic U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin and Republican U.S. Rep. Ray LaHood, both of Illinois, represents the strongest public dissent so far in the **base closure** debate.

"We are looking into that," said Defense Department spokesman Glenn Flood. "We have not formally responded, but we think this is a separate issue altogether."

Close, merge, move?

Of top concern in Oregon is the potential loss of one or both of its main Air Guard outposts -- Portland's and the 173rd Fighter Wing at Kingsley Field in Klamath Falls. The possibilities include merging the two into one air **base**, moving one or both to an active duty Air Force **base**, such as McChord, in Washington, or leaving them where they are.

"We really have to change, as we always have, to keep up with changes on the battlefield and to keep up with changes in technology," said Lt. Col. Mike Milord, spokesman for the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C. "How it will affect a given unit right now is really hard to tell."

Portland's Air Guard unit is part of the North American Air Defense web, and has jets and pilots standing by 24 hours a day for homeland defense. The pilots fly training and reconnaissance missions regularly -- it's common in the Portland area to see a pair of F-15 jets streaking across the sky. The unit also includes military police, civil engineers and other specialists that can be called into duty by Gov. Ted Kulongoski in a state emergency.

The Klamath Falls **base** is one of only two in the country that teaches pilots to fly F-15s. As such, it could be in a stronger position to avoid cuts. In fact, the **base** could be expanded as the other F-15 teaching unit, in Florida, changes to the newer, more advanced F-22s.

Applegate, the Portland Air Guard commander, said he thinks the Air Force will phase out the F-16 fighters first, then start on the F-15s, the jet Oregon Guard pilots fly. But that doesn't mean Oregon's safe in the next round of **closures**, he said.

"What if they close an F-16 **base** in Texas? They could reach out and move F-15 training there," he said, noting that Texas has more political pull on military decisions than Oregon. "We are cognizant that our planes could be transported somewhere else. You have no guarantees."
Harry Esteve: 503-221-8226; harryesteve@news.oregonian.com

Post-Standard, The (Syracuse, NY)
April 8, 2005

PENTAGON KEEPING BRAC REPORT DETAILS SECRET UNTIL NEXT MONTH - OFFICIALS SILENT ABOUT NATIONAL GUARD BASE CLOSINGS, UNMANNED AIRCRAFT.

By Peter Lyman, Washington Bureau

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld must deliver his **base-closing** recommendations to the **Base Realignment and Closure** (BRAC) commission next month, and the Pentagon is giving no hints as to what those will be.

Rep. James Walsh, R-Onondaga, probed for information Thursday at a hearing of the House Appropriations subcommittee on military quality of life and veterans affairs, which he chairs. The witnesses, two Pentagon officials, offered no clues as to what the still-secret report might contain.

Walsh asked if there is, as has been rumored, a commitment not to close National Guard **bases** in states that have only one. That could affect New York, which has five, including the 174th Fighter Wing in Syracuse.

"I am not aware of any" such commitment, answered Philip Grone, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment. "We're looking at all our mission requirements" in evaluating **bases** for the BRAC process, Grone said.

Walsh also asked the witnesses about the future of unmanned aircraft such as the Predator. A squadron of Predators will be based in New York, the Pentagon has said. Although the exact location hasn't been announced, sources have been reported as saying Syracuse is the squadron's destination.

The use of unmanned aircraft "probably will increase in the future," said Ryan Henry, principal deputy undersecretary of defense for policy. They will be integrated with other forces, Henry said: "We're not taking the human element out of combat."

Thus far, the combat role of the Predator, which is "flown" by a pilot on the ground, has been mostly surveillance. It can be armed with missiles and used for attack missions. Other capabilities are still in development.

Walsh asked if current fighter wings eventually would evolve into Predator wings.

There are currently no plans for that, Henry said.

Syracuse's 174th Fighter Wing flies F-16s, which have been targeted for phase-out by the Air Force. The **base** has about 2,000 employees and an annual payroll of \$77 million.

A Predator squadron typically contains 12 aircraft and about 460 people to operate and maintain them, plus support personnel.

Once the BRAC commission receives the Pentagon's recommendations, it will study the plan before making its own recommendations to the president in September. Congress will then either approve or reject the plan as-is. Lawmakers cannot make changes to it.

Tulsa World (OK)
April 8, 2005

Henry hopeful after talks with BRAC official

By Jim Meyers

WASHINGTON -- Gov. Brad Henry left a meeting Thursday with the new head of a **base**-closing commission, saying he was "cautiously optimistic" that Oklahoma will keep all of its military installations.

Still, Henry's visit also indicated to some observers a more fragmented approach by officials to the upcoming round of **Base Realignment and Closure**.

Henry made the trip to Washington to meet with Anthony Principi, a former U.S. secretary of veterans affairs who was tapped recently by President Bush to lead the next BRAC panel.

"We were there to make the case for Oklahoma military **bases** and establish a face-to-face relationship with the chairman of the BRAC commission," the governor said. "We did that very well. It was a great meeting."

Henry ticked off what he and others believe are the assets Oklahoma has going into the next BRAC round: major support of the military by local communities as well as the state; unmatched ability of its military installations to expand to meet new missions; unrestricted air space; and strongest land-use planning laws in the country.

Such assets, he said, will become tiebreakers once the commission begins comparing **bases** in different states.

"There are no easy decisions in this BRAC," Henry said. "All the easy decisions have been made in previous BRAC rounds."

He said he still views members of the Oklahoma delegation as taking the lead in the state's effort to keep its military installations open.

U.S. Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla., the state's senior senator who has served in Congress since the BRAC process began, said he was surprised by the governor's trip.

"Apparently he wanted a trip to Washington," Inhofe said. "I am surprised he hasn't called us. I am the second-ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. We are on top of the whole process. Every single thing that is going on, we are aware of."

Inhofe agrees with Henry that members of the state's congressional delegation should take the lead in the effort to save Oklahoma's military installations.

"I am surprised if the governor wanted to find out something about where we were on BRAC, he didn't call me," he said. "Again, we are living and breathing this on a daily basis as we have in the past . . . This is an issue we all are concentrating on. It is taking place in Washington."

Inhofe knows Principi and serves on the committee that handled his nomination.

Next month, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is scheduled to give the new BRAC commission a list of military installations that have been recommended for **closure** or **realignment**.

Commission members then have until mid-September to report to the president.

Oklahoma officials have said they believe that the state's facilities -- the McAlester Army Ammunition Plant, Altus Air Force **Base**, Fort Sill near Lawton, Tinker Air Force **Base** in Midwest City and Vance Air Force **Base** in Enid -- are in good shape to survive this round, as they have in past rounds.

Corpus Christi Caller-Times (TX)
April 12, 2005

Base commission seeking 90 staffers - Director wants workers before closures known

By Tara Copp

WASHINGTON - The 2005 **base closure** commission is trying to quickly hire about 90 staffers in time for the May 16 **base closure** list release. "I need a lot of advanced people," said Charles Battaglia, the newly hired BRAC executive director.

Battaglia was selected by incoming commissioner and former Veterans' Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi, who knows Battaglia through his position as majority staff director on the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Battaglia said he is looking for candidates with strong analytical skills who will research **bases** as each facility states its case to stay open. He also needs seasoned schedulers who can arrange the many on-site

trips and regional hearings the commissioners will take in upcoming months. He also needs to fill several administrative support positions.

Battaglia also is busy renting office space outside of the Pentagon where the commissioners will meet.

"We don't even have a Web site up yet," he added.

Battaglia is trying to get all of this organized before the first public **base** commissioners hearing in Washington, which is tentatively scheduled for the first week in May. The commission is trying to hold at least one public hearing to get organized before the Pentagon's list of recommended **closures** is released May 16. After the list is released, the commissioners will begin a flurry of meetings in Washington with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, then on to each service branch, and then on to regional meetings. Each meeting is required by law to be public and be posted 15 days in advance.

Battaglia said the commissioners have not had a chance to get together yet, and that he hasn't heard anything about the upcoming list.

"We're all in the dark here like everyone else, until May 16," Battaglia said.

Because of the time crunch, Battaglia offered an address where candidates could send a resume and qualifications:

Charles Battaglia
Executive Director BRAC Commission
C/O Washington Headquarters Services
Suite 940
Arlington, VA, 22202
Corpus Christi Caller-Times (TX)
April 12, 2005

Bill for bases may be 1st law - Perry may sign plan to help military towns

By TY MEIGHAN

AUSTIN - Gov. Rick Perry is expected to sign the first bill of the legislative session today, authorizing defense communities to use sales tax revenue for projects that support or redevelop military **bases**.

Senate Bill 252 by Sen. Craig Estes, R-Wichita Falls, allows communities to use voter-approved 4A/4B economic development sales taxes for the projects.

Both the House and Senate unanimously approved the measure, which takes effect when Perry signs it today.

Under the legislation, defense communities can dedicate sales tax revenues for projects that prevent the **closure** or **realignment** of an installation, to attract new missions or to redevelop the area if needed.

Before 2003, communities used the funds for military-related projects but mostly for redevelopment after **bases** were closed or realigned.

But Estes' bill was needed to correct a mistake from the 2003 legislative session, when lawmakers passed an economic development reform measure that unintentionally excluded military projects.

"It was an oversight last session and we need to go ahead and get some of this money spent if there's a military community that wants to spend it," said Estes, vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and Military Installations. "We're happy to get that corrected and just glad the governor's going to sign it."

Officials in Texas and other states are pressing hard to bolster their military facilities as the upcoming round of **base** closings looms. The Pentagon's list of recommended **closures** will be released next month.

Texas has 18 military installations and the Pentagon is looking to cut its infrastructure to save billions of dollars.

Perry believes the legislation is important to help defense communities, said Kathy Walt, a spokeswoman for the governor.

"It's one of the things that the governor mentioned in his State of the State speech in terms of helping military communities with their needs, particularly as we head into the BRAC process," Walt said.

Three senators who represent the Coastal Bend were co-authors of the legislation - Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, D-McAllen; Eddie Lucio, D-Brownsville; and Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo.

Rep. Gene Seaman, R-Corpus Christi, was a joint author of the identical House bill. And Reps. Juan Escobar, D-Kingsville, and Abel Herrero, D-Robstown were co-authors.

Although the legislation won't help Corpus Christi because the city has maximized its sales taxes, it could benefit Ingleside. One provision in the bill allows communities to use funds for a Coast Guard project if the facility is used jointly with a branch of the military, such as the Navy.

Ingleside city officials want to extend the pier for larger Coast Guard ships at the mine-hunter **base** to promote joint-training capabilities.

The Ingleside City Council determines the use of economic development sales tax revenue, said Roger Wright, president of the Ingleside Chamber of Commerce. But Wright said he supports expanding how the taxes can be used to promote economic development in the city.

"The chamber would very much like to partner with the city of Ingleside to increase the economic development efforts of our city, and we are currently exploring those possibilities," he said.

Graphic: Sales taxes for **bases**

Under the legislation, defense communities can dedicate sales tax revenues for projects that prevent the **closure** or **realignment** of an installation, to attract new missions or to redevelop the area if needed.

Co-authors of Senate bill

Sen. Juan 'Chuy' Hinojosa, D-McAllen

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Rep. Juan M. Escobar, D-Kingsville

Rep. Abel Herrero, D-Robstown

Richmond Times-Dispatch (VA)

April 10, 2005

RESIDENTS TO PANEL: PACK UP THE JETS COMBAT PLANES AT OCEANA MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE, THEY SAY

A group of residents upset about jet noise plans to ask a federal commission to relocate the Navy's combat jets from Oceana Naval Air Station to another East Coast **base**.

Kim Johnson, chairwoman of Citizens Concerned About Jet Noise, said the group wants the **Base Realignment** and **Closure** commission to move Oceana's F/A-18 Hornet and Super Hornet jets and to use the Virginia Beach **base** for other military functions.

"It was a very tough decision to make," Johnson said. "We have been laboring over it for quite some time."

The secretary of defense will release a list of recommended **base** cuts and realignments to the nine-member commission by May 1. The commission has until Sept. 8 to make its recommendations to the White House.

Some state and city officials dismissed the civic group's latest move, which comes at a time when other communities and states are furiously lobbying to protect their military assets.

"It's the premier Navy air facility on the East Coast," said George Foresman, an assistant to Gov. Mark R. Warner. "You just don't wake up one morning and say 'We're going to turn it into something else.'"

Some supporters of keeping the Navy's carrier-based jets in Virginia Beach say that relocating the fighter jets could doom the **base**.

Bob Mathias, assistant to the Virginia Beach city manager, said asking the government to realign the **base** isn't much different from asking it to close Oceana.

"They think there is something else that could take the Hornets' place, but they don't say what that is," retired Rear Adm. Fred Metz, a former aviator, said of the civic group's members. "I don't like their position. It's not realistic."

Metz has advocated that the city and Navy work harder on noise and encroachment issues surrounding the **base**.

Johnson doesn't believe the Navy would simply abandon Oceana, even if its mission changed. "It is too important to the military," she said.

Washington Times, The (DC)
April 13, 2005

Educate the military - Defense underutilizes its institutions

By Harlan Ullman

For all of the Bush administration's determined efforts to "transform" the American military for the new century, one crucial ingredient has so far been deferred. That is education. But without exploiting the extraordinary educational assets at the Pentagon's disposal, the process of transformation cannot be sustained or kept alive, well and vibrant. The Pentagon leadership has not yet recognized this necessity.

In fairness, the Pentagon is busy. It is fighting three wars - Afghanistan, Iraq and against global terror. It is transforming itself. It is coping with the congressionally mandated Quadrennial Defense Review and the latest round of the politically radioactive **base realignment** and **closure** process. Understandably, with this huge educational system that does a pretty fair job as is, making change has been a lower priority. That is a waste of a colossal opportunity.

A few points regarding education and the Department of Defense must be understood. First, education and "training" are too often mistakenly used interchangeably. You train people to shoot rifles and to drive, ships, tanks and aircraft. You teach and educate people to be leaders, commanders and thinkers. Education is about learning. It must be oriented on what is learned not on courses attended. As Gen. John Jumper, chief of staff of the Air Force is fond of noting, his master's degree in business was mandated by the requirement for an advanced degree, not what he actually learned or could use effectively during his long and distinguished career.

Second, across government, the Department of Defense has unique educational capabilities. These extend from sending potential service academy applicants to preparatory schools to the best war colleges in the world. Indeed, a former commandant of the Army War College at Carlisle, Penn., retired Gen. Robert Scales, who holds a doctorate, calls the Naval War College at Newport, R.I., the finest heuristic teaching institution in the world. Unfortunately, relatively few naval flag officers attend that war college because of

the press of other, more important assignments, often at sea, or legally mandated promotion requirements that prevent tours at educational institutions.

Third, if the United States is to prevail in the struggle against jihadist extremists and others who use terror as a tool and a tactic to advance their political agendas, far greater knowledge and understanding of different human behavioral patterns, cultures, regions and societies are essential. These cannot be acquired in two- or three-day familiarization courses or part-time. And, as technology, science and knowledge grow exponentially, the military must keep up.

So, what should be done? First, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld should make transformation of education in the department a priority equal to military transformation. That can be done through planning, organization and management. The department's educational system already has sufficient assets. Huge amounts of money need not be spent. However, these assets must be used more effectively.

Second, at the start of every planning cycle, senior military and civilian leadership must determine the learning and education requirements expected of officers, enlisted and civilian employees. Such a step will help separate military education from its rigid and linear progression, namely a function of rank and length of service. For example, officers graduate from service academies, receive a master's degree along the way and then attend junior and senior war colleges at specific points later in their careers. Hence, officers may get an MBA at a young age and not use it until they are far more senior and may have forgotten what they once knew. Or they may need war college exposure before they become senior officers. Education must be tailored and applicable to nearer-term jobs - a variant of just-in-time practices.

Third, in addition to the annual performance report, every service person should have a learning report. Compiled in close consultation with a superior or commander, that report would specify what each individual intended to learn professionally and personally for that year. At year's end, the superior would evaluate the individual on the progress and the report would be an informal part of the service record. The focus should be on learning - not on what courses were attended or degrees awarded.

Finally, to emphasize the importance of education, the president of the National Defense University (NDU) should be made a four-star billet held by either an active duty or retired officer of unique distinction. Furthermore, the NDU should be designated as the National Security University and its enrollment greatly expanded to include non-defense government employees of appropriate rank working in the field of national security, including members of congressional staffs and agencies.

Education is the nation's not-so-secret weapon. It need not be expensive to wield. All that is needed is leadership. And that may be the most demanding task of all.

Harlan Ullman is a columnist for The Washington Times and a senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Oakland Tribune, The (CA)
April 13, 2005

Supes ponder base closures

By Les Mahler

STOCKTON — The 1,700 employees of the Defense Distribution Center of San Joaquin in Tracy and Lathrop will have to wait until May 16 to find out if their jobs at the Tracy and Lathrop depots are safe.

That's when U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld is expected to send his list of recommended **base closures** to the **Base Realignment** Commission.

From there, the list will go to President Bush, who can either approve it in its entirety or dismiss it, according to Fred Greene, a consultant on the **base realignment** with the San Joaquin Partnership. However, the president can't change the list, he said.

Greene told San Joaquin County supervisors on Tuesday that if the president submits the recommendations to Congress, they become law 45 days later. If Bush rejects the list, the commission has until Oct. 25 to come up with another list.

The president would then have until Nov. 7 to approve that list.

If the commission does recommend **closure**, Greene said it will take about 18 months to vacate or empty the Defense Distribution Center.

Asked by Supervisor Jack Sieglock if the county could do anything to stave off **closure**, Greene said that although California's two senators and Rep. Richard Pombo, R-Tracy, and Rep. Dennis Cardoza, D-Merced, have been involved in meetings, the process isn't political.

"The senators are very aware and Congressmen Pombo and Cardoza have come to the meetings," Greene said.

The only good news is that California has two advocates on the commission, former Department of Veterans Affairs director Anthony Principi, who chairs the commission, and Philip Coyle, who was nominated by Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco.

Since 1988, there have been 29 **base closures** in California.

According to the Defense **Base Closure** Act of 1990, there are certain criteria that need to be followed in closing a **base**, including giving priority to military value.

But county supervisors said the **closure** of the depot would hurt economically.

Washington Post
April 15, 2005
Pg. B1

Area Communities Lobby In Defense Of Their Bases

By Michelle Boorstein, Washington Post Staff Writer

Military and economic development officials in the Washington area have spent the last two years preparing for the Pentagon version of "Survivor."

As the Defense Department plans its largest realignment of military bases, communities have invested millions of dollars in hopes of convincing the Pentagon not to eliminate local bases. From Norfolk to Frederick, the region is home to almost 50 military installations -- the largest concentration in the country -- and many are the largest employer in their communities, helping the area to weather the nations' recent economic downturn.

The list of bases selected to close is due to be released May 16, but in Washington, Maryland and Virginia, the worst fears appear to have subsided. Advocates for the three jurisdictions said that rumor and research has led them to believe that no regional bases will close in the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. But they say there could be a lot of shuffling among bases.

"I expect the 'R' in BRAC to be a lot more significant than the 'C,'" Cord Sterling, military legislative assistant to Sen. John W. Warner (R-Va.) said yesterday at a meeting of the Virginia Commission on

Military Bases. The commission, which met in Fredericksburg, was formed in 2003 to lobby for Virginia's 31 military installations.

According to economic development officials, many area bases employ a large percentage of researchers and scientists -- both military personnel and contractors. Some base officials believe those jobs are stable and will stay put; others believe those jobs can be moved more easily than jobs at training bases.

Fort Meade, which is Maryland's largest employer, and Fort Detrick, Frederick's largest employer, have grown significantly since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, and officials in those communities said they had no indication that the trend would reverse. Officials in Dahlgren, Va., said the same is true of the U.S. Naval Surface Warfare Center there.

But communities have not left their bases' futures to hope or chance, spending more money on lobbying in this round of closures than in previous rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995.

Virginia put \$1.7 million into helping communities make cases for their installations, and legislators passed laws in the recent session to provide military employees better life insurance coverage and extend economic development incentives to bases that are typically reserved for private companies.

Maryland, which has 11 large bases, passed a law this year making housing on bases tax-free. Maryland had undertaken an environmental review of bases in an effort to seem eager and ready for expansions. Maryland officials also tried to smooth out problems between bases and environmental advocates "so we could have greater harmony during all this," said Brig. Gen. Michael Hayes, head of the state's office of military and federal affairs.

Several communities repaired roads to ease traffic congestion that has annoyed civilians. They also have hired consultants and lobbyists.

"They're trying to think innovatively about how they can be more attractive," said Chris Hellman, a military policy analyst at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, who has been involved with base closings since 1987.

The same process is going on across the country, Hellman said, noting that Texas passed a \$250 million bond issue last year to make money available for road improvements around bases, while other states provided discounted utilities to bases or tuition benefits for military staff at nearby schools.

"They're thinking outside the box besides just lobbyists," Hellman said.

In some cases, officials have high hopes.

"We think we stand to gain another 30,000 to 50,000 jobs," said Marcie Wallis, executive director of the West Anne Arundel County Chamber of Commerce, close to Fort Meade, which she estimated generates \$1 million in civilian payroll each year. "It's almost like we haven't had to do much."

But a large part of the BRAC process is secretive, and there is a lot of guessing. Norm Risavi, county administrator in Westmoreland County, isn't sure size will protect Dahlgren's Navy Surface Warfare Center.

"If you have the most people, I guess the assumption, the forgone conclusion, is that you will receive a hit in this round of closures. Whether that's true or not, I don't know," he said.

"We, along with everyone else, are on the outside looking in. It's difficult to know or understand what the ultimate recommendations are that will come out," said David Dickson, executive director of Virginia's commission on bases, which received a visit at yesterday's meeting from Gov. Mark R. Warner (D). Warner ceremoniously signed three bills aimed at helping prevent base closures and was applauded by 25 men and women in uniform as cameras snapped.

"We believe Virginia is the cornerstone of the U.S. military," Warner said.

Tampa Tribune
April 14, 2005

Governor Thinks MacDill Is Safe

By Mike Salinero

TAMPA - Gov. Jeb Bush said Tuesday that he doesn't think MacDill Air Force Base will be closed during the latest round of military base closings and realignments.

The governor was in town to speak at the opening session of the Joint Services Environmental Management Conference, a three-day gathering of military officers, defense industry vendors and state and local officials.

Bush said MacDill probably will be saved because of its importance as headquarters for U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command, the brain centers for military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. All of the nation's military installations are under review during the process known as BRAC, short for Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

"I believe MacDill is in good shape because the commands there are critical to the warfighting ability of our country," Bush said.

Bush said every large organization like the Defense Department needs to "pause and reflect on what strategies are needed" to operate efficiently.

"I'm a supporter of BRAC," he said.

That doesn't mean he wants to see MacDill or any of Florida's other 20 military bases on the closure list that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld will submit to the BRAC commission on May 16.

The commission, chaired by former Veterans Affairs Secretary Anthony Principi, doesn't have to follow Rumsfeld's recommendations. During earlier rounds of closures, however, the commission has agreed with about 80 percent of the Defense Department's list. Congress and the president make the final decision on the commission's recommendations.

The governor's advisory group on BRAC has hired retired Air Force Gen. J.B. Davis to lead lobbying efforts on behalf of Florida's military bases. It is unclear whether the governor's special relationship with President Bush, his brother, could boost survival chances for the state's military installations. The BRAC process was designed to free base closure decisions from political interference.

Still, local and state officials use all their influence to keep their bases off the list. The reason is economics. Roughly 12,800 military personnel and federal employees live and work at MacDill. The Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce estimates the installation contributes \$6.5 billion to the local economy.

Bush said the state is trying to enhance the value of its bases through land purchases that protect them from urban sprawl, while protecting critical ecosystems. The biggest such project, the Northwest Florida Greenway, covers 750,000 acres stretching 100 miles from Eglin Air Force Base outside Pensacola, east to the Apalachicola National Forest near Tallahassee.

The project is a partnership between Florida, the Department of Defense and the Nature Conservancy.

USA Today
April 15, 2005
Pg. 3

This City Wants Naval Base Closed

Concord, Calif., envisions homes, businesses at weapons station

By John Ritter, USA Today

CONCORD, Calif. — Cities and states across the USA are hiring Washington lobbyists and mounting crusades to save their military bases as a deadline looms for the Pentagon's next budget ax.

But not Concord. This city of 124,000 northeast of San Francisco has taken the unusual step of asking the Defense Department to close a naval weapons station here. Its sprawling acres are far more valuable for development in the USA's priciest metropolitan housing market than the station's 100 civilian jobs, the city says.

But the proposal has drawn fire from environmental groups, such as the Greenbelt Alliance, and is roiling politics beyond Concord's borders. Transferring the base to private hands could upset a hard-won balance between suburban growth and open space in Contra Costa County, one of the fastest growing of the Bay Area's nine counties.

The weapons station is uncharacteristic of the nation's bases because the potential for civilian uses clearly outweighs its local economic value. While many communities are looking at options if their bases close, virtually all of them want to keep the military and its jobs. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld must name those he wants closed by May 16.

"Concord's not getting much out of this base," says John Landis, a professor of city and regional planning at the University of California-Berkeley. "There's no local constituency to keep it open. It's a big piece of land in the normal growth area."

Through four base-closing rounds since 1988 that retired 97 major facilities and hundreds of smaller ones across the USA at a savings of \$7 billion a year, requests like Concord's are practically unheard of. Pentagon spokesman Glenn Flood says there may have been one or two others, but it's not a statistic the military compiles.

There have been many successful conversions of military installations to public and private uses, such as the former Lowry Air Force Base in Denver and England Air Force Base in Alexandria, La. But frantic appeals to keep the military in town are the norm.

California, the state with the USA's largest military presence, has been hardest hit: 29 closed bases, nearly a third of its total, and 93,000 jobs lost. In this year's round, California, like Florida, Kentucky and other states, is lobbying aggressively to protect what's left.

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger named a base support council co-chaired by Leon Panetta, a former Democratic congressman and White House chief of staff under President Clinton. The governor also hired a lobbying firm run by two other former congressmen.

Last year, the Pentagon estimated that the nation's 425 domestic bases have 24% more capacity than the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines need. Flood says the role of every base is being evaluated. An independent commission will evaluate Rumsfeld's hit list and make recommendations to President Bush and Congress. They must accept them all or ask for a new list.

For years, the base here was essential, particularly after a World War II buildup to support huge demands for explosives during the Pacific campaign. It grew to a peak of 3,000 jobs with development of modern missiles and other weapons, and as late as 1994 had 1,072 civilian workers and a \$34.3 million payroll. By the late 1990s, because of changes in military operations, its mission was greatly reduced.

“As long as it was functioning, the city never lusted over it,” Concord City Manager Lydia Du Borg says.

In 1999, the Navy mothballed the base's inland portion of more than 5,000 acres, which lies within Concord's city limits. The Army uses the rest — a tidal portion of more than 7,000 acres with a deep-water port — for a handful of weapons shipments each year.

Concord proposes 13,500 homes and commercial and retail businesses that would add 15,500 jobs on the inland piece and industrial development around the port. More than half the land would be parks and open space.

But environmentalists see needless sprawl. Instead of expanding into the base's rolling hills, they prefer that the city first build in existing urban areas that they say could accommodate as many as 8,000 homes and apartments.

“They need to use land they have before they go out and get more, (and) protect natural resources in the naval weapons station,” says David Reid, a field representative for the Greenbelt Alliance, a group that promotes denser development and mass-transit use.

Those resources include large tracts of wetlands, the county's longest pristine stretch of Diablo Creek, a historic Indian site, an elk herd and rare plants and animals such as the red-legged frog and tiger salamander.

“Like a lot of military bases, this one has been preserved behind fences for decades, which means it's one of the most biologically diverse areas left in the county,” says Seth Adams, director of land programs for Save Mount Diablo, a non-profit trust that acquires land for public parks.

Contra Costa County's median home price was \$490,000 in February, up 21% over a year earlier. By Bay Area standards, that's more affordable than Marin (\$808,000), San Francisco (\$701,000), San Mateo (\$711,000), Santa Clara (\$632,000), Napa (\$569,000) and Sonoma counties (\$525,000).

Booming Contra Costa cities such as Concord, Brentwood, Antioch and Pittsburg want more land to build houses on but feel hemmed in by growth limits that voters approved in 1990. Those limits are being re-negotiated, but there's tension because other cities — Orinda, Danville, San Ramon, Lafayette — want growth limits left alone, fearing more congestion from sprawl.

Concord says developing the base makes sense because it's near an underused commuter rail station. But Reid of the Greenbelt Alliance says that by some estimates the city's plan still would throw 200,000 more daily vehicle trips onto two already-snarled roads.

Reid says it's too early to consider a lawsuit or ask voters to derail the city's plans. It won't be known until at least September whether the base is among those the military plans to abandon.

But this is a state where grass-roots voter initiatives are practically a way of life. “Depending on what happens, we're examining the potential,” Reid says.

Portland Press Herald (ME)
April 14, 2005

Impact of BNAS closing assessed - A preliminary report suggests housing demand and prices in the Brunswick area may suffer if the air station is shut down.

By Dennis Hoey

Brunswick could see huge changes in its housing market if the Brunswick Naval Air Station is closed. RKG Associates of Durham, N.H., identified high vacancy rates as one of the town's potentially major issues in a preliminary report presented this week to the Town Council. More than 3,000 enlisted personnel rent or own homes in the area.

"If 3,000 enlisted people leave, it's going to have a major impact on the rental and private housing markets," said Craig Seymour of RKG Associates.

Seymour said apartment rents and home prices might decline, making Brunswick and surrounding towns more affordable.

The town hired RKG Associates to analyze BNAS's assets and the town's options if the **base** is put on the **Base Realignment and Closure** Commission's list, which will be made public May 16.

Brunswick and Kittery, which hosts the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, both applied for advance planning grants through the Department of Defense to do the studies. Brunswick received a \$158,000 grant and Kittery got \$175,000.

Brunswick's evaluation, which is 60 percent complete, is further along than Kittery's.

Another council workshop will be held in Brunswick once the company's final report is published, around April 30. A month before the Pentagon releases its recommended list of **base** closings, Seymour and town officials said they felt it important that the council be kept informed.

"The Department of Defense is encouraging all communities to prepare. Everyone will be in a lot better shape if they do," said Assistant Town Manager Patricia Harrington. "If a **base** is closed, it could take a community years to get their arms around the issues."

Sasaki Associates Inc. of Watertown, Mass., will look at the Kittery shipyard's inventory and what could be done with existing equipment if it is closed. Nuclear submarines are overhauled and refueled there.

"The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is totally different. It's a very heavy industrial site," said Kittery Town Manager Jonathan Carter. "They do the finest work in the country, which is what makes this process so hard. We are all working hard to keep the shipyard open, but we also have a responsibility to the taxpayers (to do the study)."

In a separate analysis, the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission will hire a consultant to examine how reliant York County and Rockingham County in New Hampshire have become on the shipyard and how the region could diversify its economy if the shipyard is shut down.

Paul Schumacher, director of the planning commission, expects the economic study to start in May and be completed at the end of the year.

Brunswick town officials have a lot to think about. Consultants raised the prospect of the town or the state running the **base** airport, which has two runways, a new hangar and an air traffic control tower that is under construction.

"What happens to Brunswick's airport in the future? Is there a demand? The answer we found is: There may not be," Seymour said. "The state seems to be pretty well served by commercial airports in Portland and Bangor. There is just not a huge demand in a state as small as Maine."

Another key issue involves land. In the 1940s, the federal government took about 1,000 acres that had been deeded to the town. The Town Commons, a 50-plus-acre park on Harpswell Road, is all that remains in town ownership.

Further research into records will be needed, but Seymour said there is a chance that some of the land that was taken by the Navy could revert to town ownership if the **base** is closed.

BNAS is listed as a federal Superfund cleanup site, but Seymour said the good news is that the **base** has gone to great lengths in the past decade to clean up the property and prevent further contamination.

"That was the most pleasant surprise," he said. "Brunswick does not have the type of environmental problems you would typically find at another military **base**."

The Mississippi Press
Friday, April 15, 2005

As BRAC looms, Singing River mission unchanged

By JOHN SURRATT

MOSS POINT -- Regardless of what happens to Naval Station Pascagoula in the coming base realignment and closure round, the goal of Jackson County's Singing River Island Diversification Committee will remain the same -- develop a mix of military and private industry for the island.

"Our plan, even from the beginning, was that we would want to keep as much military as possible on Singing River Island," Den Knecht, committee chairman told local business and community leaders Thursday. "In addition to that, we want to diversify the island and put industry on it as well. Regardless of the BRAC outcome, that's still our plan."

Speaking at the Jackson County Economic Development Foundation's Quarterly meeting, Knecht said committee members are trying to predict what missions or bases might be available for realignment with other installations and how they might fit with Naval Station Pascagoula.

"We're talking to the right people. Over the last month, we've had the opportunity to talk to the assistant secretary of the Navy for bases; we have had audience with the deputy commandant of the Coast Guard who was visiting here as a guest of Congressman Gene Taylor, and the new secretary of Homeland Security as well as the commandant of the Coast Guard," he said.

"It's very, very important to have those people there and our senators and our congressmen are not going to miss any opportunity to pitch what we have at Singing River Island and what the potential is for the future of these organizations."

Knecht said committee members believe that Naval Station Pascagoula has a very strategic location for Coast Guard/homeland security expansion as well as for Navy missions.

"We've already touted its many advantages to the right officials: The fact that it's located in the middle of the Gulf; that it's only 12 miles away from deep water -- a significant strategic advantage," he said.

"And it's close to Northrop Grumman Ship Systems, where the Coast Guard deepwater fleet is going to be introduced into the Coast Guard over the next decade or so."

Since the committee was formed about six months ago, Knecht said, there have been several changes in the targets for the BRAC round. Those figures have ranged from closing between 22 to 25 percent; between 22 to 35 percent and up to 40 percent.

"Lately, there has been more emphasis on realignment and co-location of bases and Secretary (Donald) Rumsfeld now is saying that the number of bases closed is probably now less than 20 percent. This has to do primarily with troops that will be returning from Europe," he said.

"As we always like to say, it doesn't make any difference whether the number is 22 percent, 18 percent, 40 percent if you're a community or a base affected by this, it might as well be 100 percent."

Locally, he said, the mission at Naval Station Pascagoula has been eroding during the past year with the decommissioning of two cruisers that were based there, and the third cruiser, the USS Thomas S. Gates, is expected to be decommissioned before the end of the year.

Knecht believes the county's ability to provide assistance to industry will help it in keeping a military presence on Singing River Island.

"We have a terrific track record here in Jackson County for economic development, and we have told the Navy and Coast Guard that all the economic development resources of the county and the state are available not just for industry, but also for military needs," he said.

"And we have offered this to the Coast Guard and the Navy, making all of our resources available, doing all we can in order to help the Navy and the Coast Guard with their economic situation in regard to continuing and expanding Singing Island. That's our position and our plan, and that's regardless of what occurs next month with BRAC."

The Tampa Tribune (FL)
Apr 15, 2005

City Council Nears Limits On Developments By Base

By ELLEN GEDALIUS and ANDY REID

TAMPA - The city council is closer to halting development in sections of south Tampa near MacDill Air Force Base.

Council members unanimously supported Mayor Pam Iorio's recommendation for a rule that would stop zoning changes allowing intensive development, at least until July.

People still would be able to make adjustments to their homes, and developers would be able to build, but they would be prohibited from requesting rezonings that would increase density.

"In some people's perception, this is a moratorium," Councilwoman Rose Ferlita said. "We need to do everything we can to keep MacDill where it is."

The move comes as a joint land-use study committee works toward making recommendations about surrounding development and the base's effect on neighbors.

The move also comes as the federal government undergoes its Base Realignment and Closure Process. By May 16, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is expected to submit his closure recommendations to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

The roughly 350-acre area is bordered by the base, Interbay Boulevard, Bay Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard. The spread of new houses, town homes and other development near the base could influence federal officials who are considering base closings.

Thom Snelling, Tampa's land development coordinator, said the city is trying to limit residential density, commercial density and building height.

"It is a move in an abundance of caution ... to protect a valuable resource," Snelling said.

Some developers said this week that although they support MacDill, they oppose changes affecting development.

An ordinance could come back for the council's approval in early May.

In other business, efforts to clamp down on city code breakers gained steam Thursday when the council gave initial approval to increased fines.

Fines for first-time offenses would increase from a \$250 daily maximum to a \$1,000 maximum per day. Fines for repeat offenders would go from a \$500 daily maximum to \$5,000.

The punishment for an “irreversible” violation would go from \$5,000 per violation to \$15,000.

The proposal goes back to the council for final approval April 28.

Overgrown lawns, junked vehicles and damaged buildings are among violations that can result in code fines.

The mayor issued an executive order in March that allows the city to foreclose on property owners who do not pay their fines.

Iorio has said she plans to target repeat offenders with unpaid fines, using foreclosure to acquire land the city could use or sell to developers.

Although the city will work with low-income residents who need help repairing their property, the new proposals set tougher repercussions for those who flout the rules, City Attorney David Smith said.

“We do want to have an incentive for people to pay,” he said.

In addition to increased fines and the threat of foreclosure, the council has called for measures to publicly embarrass repeat code violators. Televising code board hearings or listing violators on the city’s cable channel were among the options.

“Once they realize we really mean business on this, they will stop this,” Councilwoman Mary Alvarez said.



AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE **NEWS ARTICLES**

Grone: BRAC 2005 Important for Many Reasons

By Samantha L. Quigley
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, April 12, 2005 – Base Realignment and Closure 2005 is important for many reasons, according to Philip Grone, deputy undersecretary of defense for installations and environment.

“In order to support ongoing force transformation, to improve the joint utilization of our assets, to convert waste to warfighting ... all of those things are important in and of themselves,” Grone said in an interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel on April 11.

“But the timing of BRAC for 2005 is also important because it provides a platform, an opportunity, for us to assess the sites and select the sites for forces that will return to the United States as a result of the broader global-force posture realignment that the secretary and the department have undertaken.”

DoD uses the process to reorganize its installation infrastructure to most efficiently support its forces, increase operational readiness and facilitate new ways of doing business, according to the BRAC Web site.

The first BRAC occurred in 1988, and more followed in 1991, 1993 and 1995.

Congress authorized BRAC 2005 in the fiscal 2002 National Defense Authorization Act. The selection criteria were published in February 2004. In March of this year, President Bush appointed the members of an independent BRAC commission.

The next big BRAC deadline is May 16 when Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld must make his recommendations for realignments and closures to Congress and the commission. By Sept. 8, the commission must send its findings to the president, who has until Sept. 23 to approve or disapprove the commission's report.

Grone said that initially all installations are considered for closure or realignment.

"By statute all military installations are to be treated equally," he said. "Throughout this process we are assessing all of our installations and functions and missions in an equal way so that we can have a defensible package of recommendations to provide to the independent commission."

There are several criteria for selecting a base for BRAC action, but one top consideration is the installation's current and future mission capabilities and the impact on operational readiness of the total force, including the impact on joint warfighting, training and readiness.

"In this round of BRAC, the joint cross-service groups that we have established have greater breadth (than BRAC 1995)," Grone said. "So rather than looking at, as we did in 1995, depot maintenance in this round of BRAC, we're looking at all the of the industrial activities of the department on a joint basis."

Medical functions, headquarters and support, education and training, intelligence, supply and storage are all being assessed from a joint perspective, he said. This will help provide the most efficient military structure.

Grone noted that jointness is a "key aspect" of this BRAC. "The decision process in this BRAC is joint from top to bottom in this round of BRAC," he said.

Another important criterion when the commission considers an installation for a BRAC action is the availability and condition of lands, facilities and associated airspace both at both existing and potential receiving locations. That availability also extends to homeland-defense training missions.

Bases chosen for closure or major realignment can expect the process to be completed within six years from the approval of recommendations. They can also expect some assistance and guidance from the DOD and interagency partners, Grone said.

DoD's Office of Economic Adjustment makes available planning grants and assistance. Also, Grone said, a series of policy reforms will enhance the DoD's ability to move forward to close or realign a base as expeditiously as possible to allow the economic redevelopment of the areas affected.

"All the communities that support our military installations do so very solidly with a great deal of cooperation and partnership," he said. "But as a result of what we must do to enhance the military mission, it's inevitable that there will be some bases, as excess capacity, will no longer be required.

"In those circumstances we're going to work in a very productive way, we trust, with those local communities ... working in partnership with them to provide a foundation for solid economic redevelopment.



Commentary: Transforming through BRAC?

April 15, 2005

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, April 15, 2005) -- For many Soldiers and their families, their Army installation represents security and stability, and reinforces the sense of belonging to the unique culture of the "military family."

Soldiers return from their deployments to an area that is familiar -- to "Fort Home."

For the local community, the installation represents economic interdependence and more. There is pride in being associated with and supporting our Soldiers – especially now when our nation faces undefined threats. Some communities grew solely in response to the support mission for the flow of Soldiers and their families in and out of the installation.

So how can it be good to break these bonds and reestablish a new identity at a new base, when things are working so well at "Fort Home?"

A new round of BRAC may make that necessary as transformation changes the way the Army does business, but transformation is change and change can be for the better.

Traditionally, BRAC is designed primarily to gain efficiencies and save money. For BRAC 2005, the Secretary of Defense has added the goals of transformation and joint basing, training and operations to the BRAC agenda. Although this BRAC is shaping up to be more far-reaching, it is not new.

Why do we need BRAC?

There have been four rounds of BRAC since the program's inception in the 1980s, saving taxpayers more than \$18 billion. In the 1990s, the Army alone closed 112 of its bases in the United States and realigned another 27, saving an estimated \$3.1 billion.

The Department of Defense leadership has determined that there remains a 20 to 25 percent excess capacity throughout its installations. DoD received congressional authorization for a new BRAC round in 2005.

Under the BRAC 2005 milestones, the president will nominate BRAC commissioners this month. After the commissioners review the facilities, their recommendations will go to Congress in November.

For DoD, BRAC can achieve several goals: eliminate excess infrastructure; reshape our military; pursue joint operations; optimize military readiness; and realize significant savings in support of transforming the Department of Defense.

At a minimum, BRAC 2005 must eliminate excess physical capacity, which diverts scarce resources from defense capability. However, BRAC 2005 can make an even more profound contribution to transformation by balancing the Army's structure with its defense strategy. By creating joint organizational and basing solutions, the Army can ease joint missions, reduce waste, save money and free resources to recruit quality people, modernize equipment, and develop the abilities needed to meet 21st Century threats.

BRAC provides the Army support to meet the challenges of today's world. As our fighting forces evolve to

quicker, lighter and more mobile units, the support structure must also change.

Will it be like previous BRACs??

Where prior BRAC rounds were primarily focused on saving money, the BRAC 2005 process is primarily focused on transformation and creating a more nimble and adaptable Army. Military value is the primary focus for analyzing installations. The selection criteria also consider potential cost savings, community support and environmental considerations.

In the past, “excess capacity” meant entire bases or large parcels of land. Now, the excess capacity of today’s infrastructure is scattered “pockets” throughout an installation’s holdings, most often in the form of underused or vacant facilities. These vacant or underused facilities can be made productive through joint use or sharing by several organizations.

More Jointness?

BRAC 2005, unlike prior BRAC rounds, will also include potential realignment and closures of United States Army Reserve and Army National Guard facilities. The focus will be on consolidating and realigning such facilities to maximize savings, reduce footprints, and enhance the mobilization process. As with the active component, the reserve component will look for joint stationing opportunities both within the Army and with other service reserve components.

Implementing BRAC 2005 will be different?

The Army’s implementation of the BRAC 2005 recommendations will be different from previous rounds of base closing and realignment in many ways: there will be more joint approaches and solutions, more public-private cooperation, more proactive communications, and more interagency cooperation. BRAC 2005 will provide effective stewardship of the taxpayers’ investments at all levels of government by making better use of DoD property through shared use with stakeholders or return of property to the tax rolls or public use. Cost effective, local solutions will involve extensive public participation as BRAC properties are closed, realigned or sold.

The Army will work hard to communicate the BRAC 2005 goals and strategies. The Army will work with local redevelopment committees to ensure former military properties will be ready for new economic opportunities.

The vast majority of communities affected by closure and realignment decisions of the past BRAC rounds have successfully moved to productive economic development. The Army remains committed to working with BRAC 2005 communities to repeat those successes.

Sun Journal (New Bern, NC)
April 15, 2005

Congressmen hold meeting on depots with military leaders

By Sue Book

NARF, NADEP, NAVAIR, Naval Air Depot Cherry Point - the facility aboard MCAS Cherry Point that repairs and rebuilds aircraft has answered to a lot of names during its 61-year history.

The depot employs about 4,000 civilians, and the payroll at the 145-acre factory is more than \$275 million a year.

But the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process is potentially life-threatening to the depot and some of the 76 other federal civilian industrial facilities, plants and shipyards that support the nation's military.

Earlier this week, a briefing of the U.S. House Military Depot and Industrial Facilities Caucus, co-chaired by third district Rep. Walter B. Jones, R-N.C., and Rep. Solomon Ortiz, D-Texas, shared collective concerns and queried military service maintenance leaders from all branches of the military.

"I've been here 10 years, and I never heard such encouraging words of success of the depot facilities," Jones said in an interview following the briefing.

"The only problem I heard was that when the war winds down in Iraq, the country needs to have adequate funding for depots in this country," he said of talks with military service leaders.

Jones said he left the caucus feeling that "North Carolina bases are in a good strategic position" to survive BRAC intact for three reasons: Communities have always shown appreciation for military presence. The region remains essentially rural and counties have zoned to protect bases from encroachment. Eastern North Carolina has a bombing range so practice travel time and expense is minimized.

"With the cost of gas, that is really important," Jones said. "MCAS Cherry Point is still the largest Marine air fighter squadron base east of the Mississippi River.

"And as far as I know, there are additional air assets still designated for eastern North Carolina. Cherry Point is still scheduled to get a couple of squadrons of FA-18's."

He said he doubts the Washington-Beaufort county opposition to the Outlying Landing Field would nix that.

The domestic base and depot reduction of the 2005 BRAC will probably be less than the 24 percent originally proposed because more foreign bases will be closed, Jones said.

"And people have to realize that we have got to maintain a strong military. This is a very unsafe world and we just need to be ready," said Jones, who sits on the house Armed Services Committee.

He thinks this BRAC will be less political than those in 1988, 1991, 1993 and 1995 and is not concerned that, given the large military presence in the state, a North Carolinian was not named to the commission.

"Time will tell but I think those in the Department of Defense have approached this more from a business standpoint," he said. "These recommendations will be analyzed as good solid business and military moves, not political decisions."

Jones said he wouldn't second guess the state and regional leadership's lobbying efforts to highlight the area's positives.

"They need to keep doing what I think they have done for years since the last BRAC," he said. "Those in Craven, Pamlico and Carteret have proven they appreciate Cherry Point being in Havelock. The state of North Carolina does a lot of good things to enhance the lives of those in the military here."

He said he sees more military-related private industry locating in eastern North Carolina over the next few years, including small companies employing 50 to 60 people that pay good wages and use the benefit of having many in the military staying in the area.

An announcement of a preliminary list of bases and depots to be closed or realigned is scheduled for May 16.